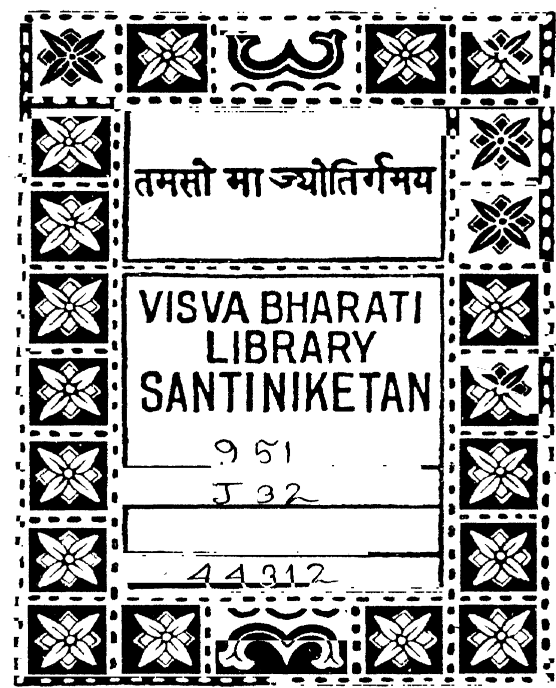


CHINA, SPAIN, AND THE WAR

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ESSAYS AND WRITINGS

By
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PREFACE

The essays and writings that have been collected in this book have already appeared in various periodicals and newspapers, notably the 'National Herald' of Lucknow. Some of them appeared as unsigned articles in the 'Herald' . The Congress Working Committee's Statement on the War Crisis has been given as an appendix, as this Statement has governed Congress policy in recent months and is essential to a proper understanding of the situation in India.

Most of these essays or articles were written during the last six months. In this rapidly changing world, it is difficult to keep pace with events, and sometimes the ink is hardly dry before the written word is out of date. These writings therefore are obviously of Yesterday; yet, even yesterday's impressions and ideas have some value, for out of them emerges Today with its own problems. Friends have urged me therefore to collect and publish these fragments and I have willingly acceded to their desire.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Allahabad
January, 1940

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Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, Madame Chiang and Jawaharlal Nehru

CHINA

The news agencies feed us with news of Europe and of what Herr Hitler says or Mr. Neville Chamberlain denies. We hear little about China except that an air raid has taken place and there have been hundreds or thousands of casualties. It is one of our many unfortunate disabilities that we depend almost entirely for our foreign news service on a British agency which looks at news not from our point of view, but definitely from the British imperialist view-point. Its offices in London decide what is good for us to have, and a restricted measure of this is poured out to us from day to day. What Lord Zetland or some one else says may be interesting, but it is not exactly world news. Reuters, however, still think that we wait eagerly for the golden words that fall from the mouths of the big officials of the India Office. Meanwhile real world news for which we hanker is denied to us.

Any person who has travelled East to Malaya or Java knows the tremendous difference between the news supply there and in India. Fresh news

pours in there about China, the Far East, America and even Europe, and not only fresh news but a fresh outlook, which is a pleasant change after the Reuter service. This fresh news comes through the American agencies which unfortunately do not reach India.

So we hear little in India about China. Fortunately the '*Herald*' has made a particular feature of news from China and although it does not get them telegraphically, it publishes frequently special articles on conditions in China. There is no lack of news if only we can get it, for China today is news in every sense of the word.

She is news because what is happening in China is of enormous significance to the world, to Asia, and to India. China is one of the key countries of the world, and in the world perspective, she counts more than the small warring countries of Europe. In any event, to Asia and to us in India, she and her future are of prime importance.

China is news also because of the vast scale of horrible destruction that the Japanese armies have perpetrated there. Do we realise what the small news items that we read mean? Daily bombing of great cities, the killing of tens of thousands, the cruelty and inhumanity of modern warfare.

But, above all, she is news because of her heroic resistance and the way she has overcome the tremendous difficulties she had to face. Only a great people could have done that, a great people, not merely because they are the heirs to a great past, but because they have established their claim to the future. It is difficult in this changing world to prophesy, but every indication points to China emerging victorious from her present trials. In a military sense, she is stronger today, after two years of warfare, than she was at the commencement of the war. She is hardened, better organised, better equipped, and she has developed a kind of warfare which suits her technical inferiority and her wide spaces. The morale of her people is excellent, and the army and the peasantry pull together in a common undertaking. Most of the old generals, timid, compromising and incompetent, have given place to younger men trained in the hard field of experience. The old ones were politically irremovable to begin with, but when disasters came and their incompetence was manifest they had to go.

Today it is well recognised in foreign military circles, and this includes the German war chiefs, that unless something very extraordinary occurs, China will win, though it may take her

time to do so. The Chinese people and their leaders do not underrate their task. They take the long view and say that, so far as they are concerned, the war has just begun.

What extraordinary event can occur which might imperil China's chances? It is highly unlikely that Japan by herself can succeed in crushing Chinese resistance. But if the United States of America or England deliberately adopted an anti-Chinese policy, it might make a difference. The United States will not do so for it will go counter to their whole Far Eastern policy. What of England? The England of Mr. Neville Chamberlain is capable of anything. Today however she is definitely pro-Chinese. What she will be tomorrow only Mr. Chamberlain knows.

Behind the war and inhumanity and violence, there is something happening in China which is of vital significance. A new China is rising, rooted in her culture, but shedding the lethargy and weaknesses of ages, strong and united, modern and with a human outlook. The unity that China has achieved in these years of trial is astonishing and inspiring. It is not merely unity in defence, but a unity in work and in building up. Behind the war-fronts, in the vast undeveloped hinterland of China, there are vast schemes afoot which

are changing the face of the country. In spite of continuous danger of bombing from the air, industries are growing up, and what is especially interesting a scheme of cooperatives for the small and cottage industries is taking rapid shape, even within ear-shot of the guns. The great advantage of these cottage and small industries is that they can be quickly established in the devastated regions, and can be moved if danger threatens.

This is the new China that is growing up in the smoke of war and in the midst of devastation on an unparallelled scale. We have much to learn from her.

June 15, 1939

I GO TO CHINA

Some months ago a friend told me that I was always attaching myself to lost causes. He was discussing international affairs and he did not approve of my attachments. Manchuria, Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia, Spain—it was a sorry tale of misfortune and disaster and always I seemed to be on the wrong side. He was for a realist policy, so he said, of making friends with those who were, internationally speaking, on the up-grade, or at any rate not to irritate them too much. I pleaded guilty to the impeachment, though I am not prepared to admit that I am not a realist.

That leads us of course to consider what is realism or reality. Is the temporary advantage of the moment to be the test or should we have a longer perspective? Are there any more fundamental tests of principle and ideals, or should we think only in terms of the market place? In this world of ours, where it is no longer possible for any country to live in isolation, and where every national crisis has repercussions in distant countries, can we think in terms of one nation alone? The

affairs of Danzig shake up Europe today and all the world gives ear to them, for Danzig is not Danzig only, but that never-ceasing conflict which consumes our present-day world.

I am unrepentant of my past and present attachments and I am proud that though Spain may lie low today India stood by her in her hour of need. I am still optimist enough to believe that Republican Spain will rise up again, and the Republic of the Czechs, both slain so treacherously by the hands of friends. But even if that were a vain delusion, I would still stand up for them, for they represented to me precious values in life, values for which we have laboured in India. If I deserted them, what would I cherish in India, for what kind of freedom do we struggle here?

I go to China for that great country pulls me in a hundred ways. Reluctantly I leave India at this crisis in our affairs. But always there is crisis in India and the world and our senses have grown dulled to its significance. We sit on the edge of a sword, balancing precariously, and waiting for the succession of events. Is it war or not? What does Herr Hitler say, where is Signor Mussolini, what is happening in Danzig or Tientsin or Hongkong, has Mr. Neville Chamberlain gone fishing? But the unbalanced equilibrium holds for a while

longer, and while it holds we have to set about our business.

After long hesitation I decided to go to China. I did so because far as she is, air travel has brought her near to us, and within two or three days' reach. It was easy to go there and come back quickly if need arises. I chose to go because, while I hesitated, loving and comradely hands beckoned to me from China and distant memories of ages past urged me to go. The long perspective of history rose up before me, the agonies and triumphs of India and China, and the troubles of today "folded their tents like the Arabs and as silently stole away." The present will pass and merge into the future, and India will remain and China will remain, and the two will work together for their own good and the good of the world.

I go to China because China is the symbol today of magnificent courage in the struggle for freedom, of a determination which has survived untold misery and unparallelled disaster, of unity before a common foe. I go to her with my homage and my greeting.

Friends have warned me of possible danger and probable risks. They have pressed me to give up this foolish enterprise. If millions of our Chinese comrades brave these dangers and risks,

surely an Indian may be allowed to share it with them. Surely we have not grown so fearful of risk and danger as to run away from them. The years press down upon me but the call of adventure is still there. Do my friends wish to deprive me of this tonic and this joy?

I go to China heavy at heart at the seeming disruption of what we laboured to build these many years. All the hidden evil comes out of its hiding place and raises its head, and the pathway whereon we trod in pride and confidence sees strange and uncouth shapes invading it. Courage and sacrifice and faith in each other give place to meanness and bickering and foul suspicion. We have forgotten ourselves.

But we shall find ourselves again and meet the evil face to face and scotch it and end it. And we shall enter the fray again with love for India in our hearts and the burning desire to free her people urging us ever on.

I go to China. But my heart will be in India and my mind will carry her picture wherever I go. I have seen that picture in her thousand ever-changing shapes and forms and colours all over this vast country. And millions of friendly faces will haunt me, faces into whose eager eyes I have gazed and sought to find what lay behind them.

India and China will mingle together in my mind, and I shall bring back, I hope, something of the courage and invincible optimism of the Chinese people and their capacity to pull together when peril confronts them.

August 18, 1939.

DIARY OF A JOURNEY

On my way to China I started noting down events and impressions at the end of each day. Often in the past I have made the noble resolve of keeping a diary. Like many other good intentions, this resolve faded away soon enough. This time I thought it would be worthwhile to jot down these impressions while they were fresh and to share them with my friends and colleagues in India. So I started. But at the back of my mind I knew that I would not be able to continue this. I sent my first series of impressions from Saigon, the very same evening that I had left Calcutta. The next day I reached Kunming and, tired as I was, I wrote an account of the second day and posted it early next morning. I reached Chunking and again that night I sat up till late writing. So also the fourth night. But both these last efforts of mine were not posted to India. Partly this was due to my realising how very difficult it was to keep to this daily writing after a very heavy day's programme. Partly I felt that my account or diary would take a long time in reaching India, even by

air mail. And then there was the usual war time censorship in Chungking. Nothing that I wrote was likely to offend the censors but still all these reflections induced me to give up any further writing of this description. The real reason of course was that I could not find the time.

Only for four nights I wrote and then I gave up this self-imposed task. But events crowded in one after another and new impressions filled my mind. I spent most of my time in Chungking and then went to Chungtu. It was my intention to visit many other places, and especially the North-West where the famous Eighth Route Army held the Japanese forces at bay. There also, was our Congress Medical Unit and I was eager to visit it and see its work. But all this was not to be. For while I was at Chungtu a message reached me, curiously enough at first through the British news broadcast, that the Congress President had summoned me back to India. I hurried back to Chungking and tried to find a seat by an air-liner to India. I failed in this endeavour and then the Chinese Government came to my rescue and provided me with a fine Douglas plane which brought me in three brief hours to Lashio on the Burma border. I had intended returning by the new Burma Road; instead I flew over it.

And so, after thirteen days, ended my visit to this great country. Those thirteen days were full and I could easily write a book about the sights I saw, the people I met, and the impressions I gathered. I witnessed five air raids, sitting mostly in a darkened dug-out but peeping out sometimes to see the battle in the skies. The Japanese bomber planes, caught in the beam of the search-light, shining brightly in the surrounding gloom, and trying to avoid the attack of the Chinese chaser planes. I watched the surprisingly calm behaviour of the Chinese crowds when death threatened them from the air. I saw the life in the city being carried on almost normally in spite of the terrible strain of the war. I visited factories, summer schools, military academies, youth camps, and universities, torn from their ancient roots, finding a new life and vitality under bamboo shelters. I was fascinated by the growth of the village cooperative movement and cottage industries. I met scholars, statesmen and generals, the leaders of the new China, and, above all, I had the privilege of meeting on several occasions the supreme leader and commander of China, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, who embodies in himself the unity of China and her determination to free herself. It was my privilege also to meet the first lady of the land,

Madame Chiang, who has been a continuous source of inspiration to the nation.

But though I met men and women of note and distinction, I was trying always to understand the people of China and imbibing impressions from them. I had read so much about them and their magnificent record of culture and I was eager to sense the reality. That reality came up to my expectations. For I found not only a race wise and profound, deep in the lore of its own great past, but also a vital people, full of life and energy, adapting themselves to modern conditions. On the face of even the man in the street there was the imprint of thousands of years of culture. That to some extent I had expected. But what impressed me was the tremendous vitality of the new China. I was no judge of the military position, but I could not imagine that a people with this vitality and determination, and the strength of ages behind them, could ever be crushed.

Abundant goodwill and hospitality met me everywhere, and soon I realised that this had far more than personal significance. I was looked upon as a representative of India, of the Congress, although I had no such official status, and the people of China were anxious and eager to make friends with the Indian people and to develop contacts

with them. Nothing could have pleased me better for that also was my heart's desire.

And so I came back after thirteen days, reluctantly and yet inevitably, for the call of India in these days of crisis was imperative. But that brief stay had been worthwhile for me certainly, and possibly for India and China.

One regret filled me. I had not been able to meet Madame Sun Yat-Sen, that gracious lady who has been the flame and soul of the Chinese Revolution ever since the Father of that Revolution passed away. I had met her twelve years previously for a brief half-hour, and ever since I had cherished the wish to meet her again, for she is of the elect of the world. Unfortunately she was in Hongkong and I could not journey thither.

I

August 20, 1939

We have to wait a long time at the Bamrauli aerodrome. This is always a depressing and somewhat irritating business. No one knows exactly what to do or how to behave. A farewell that is too prolonged is a nuisance. At last the Air France liner arrives and lands in style. We have another forty-minute wait while the crew and passengers feed. More irritation.

We start at 1-35 p.m.—an excellent take-off. After some time we pass Benares and have a good view of the city. Then I fall asleep. It is astonishing how much I sleep when flying. Perhaps this is partly the result of previous strain and lack of sleep. But partly also the motion and vibration induce sleep. I sleep for most of the journey to Calcutta. Once waking up with a start, I notice with surprise that we are flying low over hilly wooded country. Sometimes we just skim over a hill top. The hills have peculiar shapes and the whole country has an unfamiliar look, very different from the kind of thing we see from the railway train which takes us to Calcutta. I wonder where we are, but have no means of verifying and am too sleepy to take the trouble. Probably we were flying over eastern Bihar.

There is a strong headwind against us which reduces our land speed. The journey from Allahabad to Calcutta, which under good conditions might take two and a half hours, and usually takes three, now takes three and a half. We reach Dum Dum soon after five. Calcutta at 5-30.

Calcutta—I had deliberately refrained from informing friends in Calcutta of my arrival. Why make a fuss for a few hours, especially as I intended staying in a hotel with my other fellow passengers

in the plane? When travelling by these air-liners, it is always best to go to their hotels and be under their charge as one has to get up at unearthly hours in the morning. If one stays with a friend, there is risk of being late and delaying others or even perhaps of missing the plane. The company, therefore, includes hotel charges in the ticket for the journey.

I had informed the Chinese Consul-General of my passage through Calcutta as I hoped to meet him. He was present at the aerodrome with other Chinese friends and, to my surprise there was quite a crowd of pressmen and others.

I learnt that Rabindra Nath Tagore was in Calcutta. That was too good an opportunity to miss, as it is always a delight to meet Gurudeva. I hastened to his house from my hotel and, for all too brief a time, he spoke to me of the intermingling of the great Asiatic cultures and why it was necessary that India should develop contacts with other eastern countries. He was pleased that I was going to China and pressed me to go to Japan also, more specially to tell them not to lose their soul in their present adventure in China. He was anxious that we should make our position towards Japan and the Japanese clear. While we were entirely opposed to their militarism and imperialism

and the horrors they had perpetrated in China, we had no ill-will towards the Japanese. We wanted to make friends with them but not on this false basis. While China was suffering terribly, Japan would probably suffer greater and more permanent injury of soul by her brutal imperialism. Gurudeva wanted me to go to Japan to say all this —a large order under existing circumstances.

I assured him that I would very much like to go to Japan; I had long wanted to do so. But this seemed hardly possible now as it would take far too much time. I could not cross from Nationalist China to the Japanese-controlled areas over the various fronts. I would have to come back to Hongkong and then go by sea or air direct to Japan. This meant a much longer absence from India than I had bargained for. Besides I had no illusions about my capacity to convert the Japanese Government to peaceful and democratic ways; indeed even an approach was not possible then.

The Chinese Consul-General came and took me off to his consulate and then to a Chinese restaurant where two dozen Chinese residents of Calcutta had gathered together for a feast. I was presented with a lovely silk flag with a Chinese inscription on it offering me affectionate greetings and good wishes for the journey.

The dinner, I was explicitly and somewhat apologetically informed, was a light one so as not to delay me. I like Chinese food but I am apprehensive of their feasts. Even their light repasts are apt to be far heavier and longer than I can sustain. We had an excellent dinner of seven courses and as I was going through it and enjoying it, suddenly the prospect of an unending series of Chinese feasts overwhelmed me.

The pleasant function came to a close with expressions of mutual goodwill and I hastened back to my hotel. Some letters and other arrangements and just on the stroke of midnight, I went to bed. I had been informed that we would be called at 3 a.m. and would have to leave the hotel at 3-40 a.m. These amazing hours take away a great deal from the joy of air travel. It is not surprising that one dozes away during the journey. So ended the first day.

II

August 21, 1939

The Chinese Consul-General and other friends turn up at the hotel at 3-30 a.m. At the aerodrome I am surprised to find at that early hour crowds of Calcutta friends and colleagues, many of them angry with me for not having sent them previous

intimation of my visit.

We start off at 4-30 a.m. and soon I am asleep in my easy chair. As dawn creeps in I wake up and have glimpses of Bengal fading away into the sea.

Akyab—At about 7 a.m. we reach Akyab and find the Indian residents of the place all gathered together to welcome me. They had got intimation of my journey from the Delhi radio. We leave half an hour later. I fall asleep again and wake up later with a shiver. Evidently we are flying very high and the clouds are far above us. There is nothing to be seen but the clouds.

Bangkok—We reach Bangkok about 12 according to our watches but in Bangkok it is one. A fine aerodrome and a large crowd of Indians to greet me. They tell me that some thousands of our countrymen have gathered together a mile or two away and are waiting for me there. I am rushed there in a car and address them for a few minutes and then come back.

It is wrong to say that we reached Bangkok for the city was 18 miles away from the aerodrome. We had a distant glimpse of it from the air.

The Siamese pressmen want an interview. I answer a few questions. Indians want me to promise that I shall stay in Bangkok on my return journey. I should like to. The country attracts

me and it is a near neighbour of ours—only seven hours by air. It is not known as Siam but as Thailand, the land of the free. Soon we shall all have to call it Thailand even in foreign countries.

I have never seen such beautiful garlands of flowers as were offered to me in the Bangkok aerodrome, and I have had a wide and varied experience in garlands. They were cunningly and artistically made with perfect colour arrangements.

The Indians whom I met near Bangkok were representatives of various parts of India, but the north and west seemed to predominate. There were many Muslims and Sikhs. I spoke to them naturally in Hindustani. As I was leaving Bangkok a wireless message from Saigon informed me that the Indian community there was organising a reception for me.

Saigon—We left the Bangkok aerodrome at 1-45 p.m. The flying was uneventful. I had a faint hope that we might pass over Angkor and have a glimpse of the ruins there. This was not realised. A little before reaching Saigon we passed an enormous inland lake. Whether this was just a flooded area or a lake, I could not make out.

About five we reach Saigon. A crowd of Indians with garlands and beautiful bouquets. As soon as I got off an Indian started welcoming me

in eloquent French. He delivered quite an oration somewhat to my embarrassment, as the passengers had to go to the customs department. Soon I realised even more that I was in a little bit of provincial France—the language, the shops, the boulevards and avenues, the kiosks, all reminded one of France. I took a long drive through the city, although it was raining, and found it an attractive place, very well lighted, with the principal shops having neon lights. There were many French shops, a whole Chinese quarter, and a good number of Indian shops.

There are apparently about 5,000 Indians in Indo-China, mostly middle-class people and watchmen. A very great majority of these come from the Tamil country. Nearly all of them know some French, and many are quite fluent in it. We are an adaptable people. In India we have taken to English, in Indo-China to French. There appear to be a considerable number of Indians in the State service; these are chiefly from Pondicherry. I was glad to find that some Harijans from Pondicherry were magistrates here.

The Chinese are present in large numbers. I was told that the percentage of literacy among the people here was very high—about thirty per cent, many of them knowing French. The Anna-

mite language is now taught in Latin characters, the old Chinese characters having been largely given up.

Politically there is no life and such things as public meetings are hardly known.

In the evening I was taken to a gathering of Indians in the Nattukottai temple here, or rather in the galleries attached to it. I have found in Burma and Ceylon also that the Nattukottai temple is often used for such gatherings as there are no halls available. There was an address of welcome there and I replied to it at some length.

It is pleasing and astonishing to find how these outlying colonies of Indians are full of love for and pride in their motherland. Unfortunately they are too cut off from us. We must develop closer contacts.

A traveller to these countries is impressed by one fact—the enormous vitality of the Chinese and the Indians which sends them to far countries where, unaided, they prosper by their own exertions.

So ends the second day. It is an impressive thought that this morning I was in Calcutta, and in the course of the day I have passed Burma and Siam, and am now in Indo-China.

III

August 22, 1939

We left Saigon soon after six in the morning and went high up above the clouds. We must have been flying very high as it was fairly cold. We could not see the ground below and sometimes the clouds enveloped us and the flying was blind. We reached Hanoi at 11 after nearly five hours' flight. This was the end of our journey by Air France and we bade good-bye to 'La Ville de Calcutta' (the name of our plane). I was surprised and pleased to notice that the name of the plane was written in Bengali also on the side. This was, I suppose, a delicate compliment to Calcutta whose name the plane bore.

Hanoi—We were received by the Chinese Consul and a large number of Indians. The Consul told us that a seat had been booked for me by another plane leaving for Kunming that afternoon at three. Our Indian friends wanted me to stay here for a day or two but I could not upset my programme.

A Sindhi merchant bore me off to his house. He had a very big shop where smart and attractive-looking Annamite girls were serving at the counters. We arranged a meeting of the local Indians there and I addressed them. I found that apart from a

few Sindhis all the others were Tamils, both Hindu and Muslim. Few of them, except the Sindhis and two or three Muslims, could understand Hindustani ; still fewer could understand English. Apart from Tamil, they were perfectly at home in French. Not trusting my French, I addressed them in Hindustani and then a Muslim, probably the Imam of the local mosque, translated into Tamil.

French is obviously the dominant language, far more so than English is in India. Even beggar boys and girls asked for alms in French. The standard of literacy appeared to be high.

There are between 200 and 250 Indians in Hanoi, all engaged in business and doing well. They were all dressed in some slight variation of European attire. There were no dhotis as there had been in Bangkok and Saigon.

I had a drive through the city, which is bigger than Saigon and equally rather French-looking. Saigon appeared to me the more attractive of the two.

At 3-15 p.m. I left by plane for Kunming. A crowd of Indians and Chinese gave me a hearty send-off. The plane I travelled by belonged to the Eurasia Company, which is a Chino-German corporation. The plane was of German make

and had a German pilot. It was much smaller than the Air France liner but had room for ten passengers. We were rather cramped for space.

The approach of China filled me with excitement. The scenery was also fascinating. In the background were the mountains and a river emerging from them meandered through the valley, with wooded hills flanking it. Occasionally there were green fields and little villages. The river looked almost red and the bare patches of the hills were also bright red. Possibly it is because of this colour that the river of Hanoi is called the Red River.

As we approached the mountains we flew higher, till we were flying at about 4,000 feet right over them. An aerial view of scenery is very different from a land view and much that appears magnificent from below loses significance if seen from above. But the sight I saw was pleasing enough and the ever-changing shapes of the mountains and hills prevented monotony. A deep blue lake surrounded by greenery and red sandstone was a fascinating sight. Soon after another lake appeared in the distance but just then the attendant on the plane came and drew down all the blinds and warned us not to lift them. War precautions, I suppose. The passengers were

thus kept in 'purdah' but the German pilot of course had a full view.

We were approaching Kunming and we felt that the plane was descending. Soon there was a slight bump on landing and we were on Chinese soil.

Kunming—(or Yunnanfou)—A representative of the Kuomintang, Mr. Yong Konta, who is also a member of the Legislative Yuan, had come especially from Chungking to welcome me. The Mayor of Kunming was also there. I was told that I would have to spend the night in the city and proceed to Chungking the next day. I was taken to a hotel.

China was a new country to me, a wonderland of legend and history as well as of great deeds in the present and I was prepared for almost anything. But I was slightly taken aback when I reached the hotel. It was totally unlike any other hotel I had seen. The entrance to it and the fine courtyards and the general appearance were very attractive and typically Chinese but little in keeping with my ideas of a hotel. I adjusted myself to it and decided that this must be the Chinese way. The room I was given was rather small but clean and comfortable with hot and cold water laid on.

The mystery was solved later when I was told that the place had been a temple but had been converted into a hotel. The visitors' rooms were evidently meant for priests or monks, though no doubt they had been renovated and refurnished since then. Still the monks must have done themselves fairly well. My thoughts went back to our perpetual disputes in India about temples and mosques. The Chinese were evidently free from these inhibitions and, I was informed, had utilised many temples for schools.

The hotel was under a French manager and he gave us an excellent French dinner with Evian water to drink. He had a good stock of French wines also. Evidently China in war-time is not such a hard place to live in. But Kunming is not a typical Chinese city. It is near the frontiers and both foreigners and foreign goods crept in. The whole atmosphere of the hotel was French, even the Chinese table boys speaking French.

Both in Indo-China and here I have to dig out my rusty French as there was no other means of communication with some people. It seems odd for me to have to converse with Indians in French. Yet it is no odder than for Indians to carry on a conversation in English among themselves.

I went for a drive and a walk in the city. It is an ancient city of between 3,00,000 and 4,00,000 inhabitants, the population having gone up recently owing to war conditions, Kunming being one of the doors leading out of China. I discovered that Yunnanfou and Kunming were one and the same place. Till this evening I thought they were two different cities! Yunnanfou is the old name, Kunming the new one, but both are used indiscriminately.

I wandered through the city with a Chinese friend trying to imbibe the atmosphere of China and to find out evidences of war. Except for groups of soldiers here and there there was no other indication of war. Kunming has not been bombarded. The streets had cobble-stones and were not well-lighted, but the shops were brightly lit and were attractive. There were plenty of foodstuffs and clothing and other goods. Yet there was a lack of luxury goods. There were crowds of people in the streets, and rickshaws plying, and newsboys shouting out the name of their paper and the news. Certainly the city had a drab appearance and there was an absence of colour, but the people seemed cheerful and unconcerned. There were many bookshops, fruit seemed abundant (I saw large quantities of pomegranates). Quite a number of carders passed me

in the street carrying their carding bows, having perhaps finished their work for the day. In another place some carders were working away, and a woman was sitting with a large spinning wheel doubling yarn. Bonny little children were playing about and young boys and girls passed us, carefree and laughing.

The general drabness was probably due to the absence of colour in the clothes. Almost everybody, man or woman or child, had a dark-blue or black shirt or gown. I like the Chinese dress. If properly made, it is sweet and graceful, and it is obviously efficient from the point of view of work. Essentially it consists of a shirt and trousers, both for boys and girls. The shirt is close-fitting and may be long or short. The older girls often wear a long gown reaching down to their ankles but slit on one side up to the knee. This long gown is very attractive but not much good from the utilitarian point of view.

The Chinese porters and workers all use straw or bamboo sun-hats. In Hanoi I saw every working man and woman wearing this—an inverted basket like a sun-hat. It was cheap, light and a good protection against the sun. Sometimes the brim was so broad as to function as an umbrella also in case of rain. I think our Indian peasant

should be encouraged to make and wear some such kind of sun-hat. It will be a great help to him. I believe that sun-hats made of bamboo or some reeds are worn in Orissa and Malabar.

At a dinner I met Professor Tien Tuan Sen, Mr. K. T. Huang, a mining expert, and Mr. Hsin Sung, Director-General of Posts for China, and had a very interesting conversation with them.

I have been shown a provisional programme drawn up for me in Chungking. This is a heavy programme, but an interesting one. I shall reach Chungking tomorrow noon and probably stay there for a week. I am likely to broadcast on the radio.

I cannot quite get over the fact that yesterday morning I was in Calcutta and since then I have passed Burma, Siam and Indo-China and am now in China. It is difficult to adjust oneself to these rapid changes. How our minds lag behind modern conditions! We insist on thinking in terms of a dead yesterday, and refuse to participate in our heritage of today. Is it surprising that there is so much conflict and trouble in this world?

IV

August 23, 1939

Kunming has a delightful cool climate and the change from the heat of Hanoi was very pleasant

and agreeable. At night it was quite chilly. Perhaps this was due to the nearness of the lake which, I discovered in the morning, came right up to the back window of my room. Our hotel was named the Grand Hotel du Lac.

Early in the morning a shrill voice reached me from the courtyard. This belonged to the French manageress who was superintending the cleaning and sweeping and giving her opinion of the inefficiency of the Chinese boys in voluble and aggressive French. Other voices floated in—the chanting cries of the news-boys.

After breakfast we went for a drive to the great lake near by, passing groups of young soldiers who marched by singing. Some of these soldiers or recruits seem to be mere boys, not more than fifteen years old, but it is difficult for an outsider to guess the age of the Chinese.

Long before ten we were at the ærodrome where all was bustle. A member of the Provincial Government was also travelling by that plane and a crowd of functionaries had gathered to see him off. We started at 10.15 in a machine of the Eurasia Corporation. The plane was crowded and there was little space. All blinds were drawn. After a few minutes flight, we were allowed to look out. Evidently it was the ærodrome itself and what it con-

tained that was not meant for the public eye.

In the course of the flight I received the following message by wireless:

"Dr. Chu Chia Hwa, Secretary-General of the Central Kuomintang, heading representatives of various organisations including Mayor of Chungking, sends you herewith greetings and welcome from the aerodrome."

CHUNGKING

It took us just over three hours to reach Chungking. The entire route was hilly and as we approached Chungking the Yangtse River appeared winding in between hills and precipitous banks. There seemed to be no level bit of ground visible and I wondered how an ærodrome could have been made in that uneven country. The explanation was interesting and, for me, unique. The plane landed on a sandbank in the middle of the river. Many eminent persons had gathered there, headed by some high officers of the army and Dr. Chu, who had sent me the wireless message. As I descended, the pleasant and familiar sound of Bande Mataram greeted my ears, and looking up in some surprise, I saw an Indian in uniform. He was Mukherji of our Congress Medical Unit.

There was a brief speech of welcome and

presentation of bouquets and then we passed along a line of girls and boys in some kind of uniform who greeted me with a rhythmic waving of flags. Then to a boat to cross the river.

On the other side a long flight of steps stretched out before us and I was asked to get into a kind of sedan chair (*chow tse* it was called) to be carried up. I laughed at this idea of being carried up in this way and started mounting the steps with a great show of energy. Soon I discovered that the task was not such an easy one; there were about 315 big steps and I began to pant and grow tired. I impressed the others no doubt with my vitality but I realised suddenly that I was no longer young enough to indulge in these bright displays. We took a car then to the Foreign Office Guest House where I had been put up. There again we had to mount about a hundred steps. Chungking is spread out on hill sides and hill tops and little of the going is on the level.

Many leading officials and others came to see me and I saw the provisional programme that had been drawn up for me for the next week in Chungking. The first item was a meeting at four the same afternoon where an impressive array of 193 organisations were offering me welcome. To this meeting we went. Mr. Wu Chih-hui, an elder statesman,

spoke words of welcome and I replied. There were the national slogans, and obeisance before a picture of Sun Yat-Sen and the band playing the Chinese National Anthem, which was impressive.

I discovered in the course of this meeting that whenever the name of the Generalissimo is mentioned the audience stands up in respect. If a meeting is not to be interrupted repeatedly by this standing up, it is better to refer to the Generalissimo as the Leader or by some other title and to avoid the name.

Soon after the meeting I was to have gone to a dinner given by a number of organisations. But word came privately that an air-raid was expected and the prospect of this dinner faded out. We hurried back to our house and found the streets already full of people all going in one direction. The official warning signal had not been sounded yet, but information had been given and men and women were hurrying to the dug-outs for shelter. Chungking has one advantage. Information of approaching enemy planes comes to it early, quite an hour before the planes arrive.

The warning siren sounded soon after and I was told that I must go to one of the dug-outs. I disliked the idea immensely but I could not say no to my hosts and we motored to the special dug-

out attached to the Foreign Minister's residence. The streets now presented a much more animated scene and people were running or walking fast, all in the direction of the various air-raid shelters. Some carried little bundles or boxes with them, mothers were clutching to their babes, small families were marching together. Lorries full of people rushed by. There appeared to be no panic whatever. It was the usual routine to which they had got accustomed.

We reached the Foreign Minister's dug-out and found his friends assembling. As soon as the second warning signal came, we all marched inside a small cool place about 15 feet by 10. This had iron doors and we were told that there were 25 ft. of re-inforced concrete above us. Here we sat down or remained standing for the crowd increased till there must have been about fifty persons inside. The lights went out. Occasionally an electric torch was used.

There were many interesting people there, high government officials and their wives, generals, professors and journalists and the time would have passed pleasantly enough if my mind had not been elsewhere. It was also hot and close. Chungking had proved to be a far warmer place than I had imagined. Inside the dug-out it was slightly cooler



Dr. Chu Chia Hwa, Secretary-General of the Central Kuomintang,

but much more stuffy. If this was the condition of the favoured few, I wondered what was happening to the tens of thousands who must be crowding into the public dug-outs.

I listened attentively to noises from outside. I could make little of it but more trained ears detected the dull thuds of bombs dropping, the whirr of the Chinese chaser planes and the heavier sound of the enemy bombers.

So we waited there, occasionally having a peep into the moonlight outside. It looked so peaceful and cool and the eight-day old moon was unperturbed. Yet murder was afoot and vile destruction. For some reason or other the anti-aircraft guns were not being used and the searchlights were dark and silent. My neighbours in that dug-out thought that a dog-fight was going on between the rival planes. We whiled away the time by discussing recent developments in the international situation. The proposed Russo-German pact of non-aggression and its effects on England, France and Japan. Most of the Chinese were pleased about it, for it indicated to them the isolation of Japan.

For two hours we sat in the darkness of that dug-out. Everybody was perfectly calm and collected and I was told that usually a raid lasted for

three or four hours. I did not mind the experience for a change, but I was quite clear in my own mind that I would prefer the risk of being out in the fresh and cool moonlight to being bottled up so for hours at a time. I would prefer to be at the battle front or in a chaser plane up in the sky to this conversion of a man into a rat in a hole.

Two hours went by and then word came that the Japanese planes were retreating. Out of the twenty-seven that had come, eighteen had already been seen heading for Hankow, and the remaining nine had also gone. The light came and immediately there was bustle and excitement, and all those who had sat together so intimately for two hours parted without ceremony or goodbye and hastened to their respective homes.

The streets were filling again as people emerged from their hiding places. They came back more slowly than they had gone. On our way back we passed several groups of men with picks and shovels marching to the places where damage had been done. They went to their particular work, and others went to their own businesses, and Chungking reverted to normality. And some perhaps there were whose work was over and who testified by their dead and scorched bodies to progress and the greatness of modern civilisation.

We do not yet know exactly what happened during the raid. Apparently the main city escaped but some of the outskirts were bombed, more especially a village which was a centre of small industry.

V

August 24, 1939

Last night's air raid was rather a wash-out so far as the Japanese were concerned. It appears that they were stopped by the Chinese chaser planes outside the city and there was a bit of a dog-fight. The search-lights picked out some of the Japanese planes and they hurried to unload their bombs over the fields outside the city and departed. A hut was destroyed and two persons slightly injured. It is said that several Japanese planes were hit by machine-gun fire from the chasers. The extent of the damage done to the planes is not known but it is thought, or rather hoped, that some of them must have had forced landings on the way back.

Probably there will be more air-raids during the next few days while the moonlight continues. In future moonlight must be associated, among other things, with air-raids.

I learnt this morning that the Generalissimo had expressed his concern for my safety during last

night's raid. He sent word that I should be sent to his own special dug-out but I had already gone to the Foreign Minister's place when this message came.

I have been cordially invited by several persons —ministers and generals—to use their dug-outs whenever occasion arises. I suppose this is the height of courtesy and friendliness in this age of aerial bombing.

I spent the morning in making calls. First I went to the Kuomintang head-quarters where I met Dr. Chu Chia Hwa, the Secretary-General, who tried to explain to me the constitution and organisation of the Kuomintang. It is all very complicated and I have still the foggiest notion of how it is formed and how it functions. I did gather however that it was not a very democratic body, though it calls itself democratic. Later in the day I tried to understand the structure of the Government from some ministers. This is still more complex and the relation between the Kuomintang and Government is peculiar. Probably personal factors form the strongest link between them. I have asked for books and papers which might explain the structural side of the Government and the Kuomintang.

I then called on Dr. Wang, the Foreign Minis-

ter, whose uninvited guest I had been the night before in the dug-out. We had a long and interesting talk. My third visit was to Dr. Hollington K. Tong who is in charge of publicity. I was considerably impressed by him and his work.

Lunch was a big and rather formal affair in a riverside restaurant. It was arranged by the city corporation, the city Kuomintang, and the city garrison commander. These formal gatherings, although the hosts make them friendly enough, are embarrassing. Stilted speeches are delivered and I reply in set lifeless phrases and translations take place. Military bands break out into music when I arrive or depart and there is any amount of saluting. I fear my informal habits do not easily fit in with all this. But the greatest trial is the meal which goes on interminably, and just when I imagine that it is over, half a dozen fresh dishes are placed on the table. I like Chinese food, or some kinds of it. It shows artistry. But I do not understand the meal; it seems to be an enormous variety of *hors d'œuvres* in successions of dishes. The diners peck away at them, enjoying the delicate tastes in their infinite variety. I do not fancy the manner of eating. I do not mean the chop-sticks which are manipulated with skill and great efficiency. I wish I was more expert at them. But all the dishes are placed in the

centre and every guest goes on picking dainties out of the common pool and inevitably small bits of the juicy stuffs drop on the table-cloth.

In the afternoon I had an interesting visit from General Yeh Chien-ying of the famous Eight Route Army. He was accompanied by Anna Wong, who acted as interpreter. She is a German (Aryan) who has married in China and is fully Chinese in her sympathies and work. She has had hair-breadth escapes from Japanese bombs.

General Yeh told me about the Eight Route Army and the work it was doing, apart from its military activities. He also explained, from his point of view, the present situation in China.

I then went to Dr. Kung, the Prime Minister or, to be exact, the President of the Executive Yuan. From there we proceeded to a big tea party which a group of eminent men were giving in my honour. Among the hosts were Dr. Chu, three Ministers—Messrs Chang Li-sum, Yih Tsou-Tsan, and Chen Li-fu—and General Chen Cheng. This was a very pleasant party and I met large numbers of ministers, vice-ministers, ex-ministers, generals and even an admiral! The Chinese admiral surprised me. I enquired about the Chinese navy and I was told that it consisted at present of a few gun boats. But, in any event, the navy had a marines'

band which was performing efficiently at the party.

Among those I met at this party was a representative from Sinkiang. He addressed me, to my surprise, in Persian; I understood a word or two of what he had said to welcome me, and regretted my inability to carry on a conversation in that stately language.

There were large numbers of foreign journalists present, especially Americans and some Russians.

Chinese names are a trial, especially when I have to deal with them in large numbers. Many names sound more or less alike. I suppose it was because of this difficulty that the Chinese developed their passion for visiting cards. As soon as you meet some one, out comes his card which he hands to you. I have already collected scores of such cards. Not being used to cards in India, I do not possess many. I had a few old ones with me but the supply will not hold out for long.

To dinner with various ministers and others, including General Chen Cheng, whom I like although we have no language in common. This was an informal meal and the conversation was bright and interesting. The Chinese strike me as a singularly grown-up people. It is a pleasure to talk to them, if the language difficulty does not intervene.

No raid tonight.

SPAIN

SPAIN—A YEAR AGO

These essays, written a year after my visit to warring Spain, were attempts to capture and imprison in the written word the impressions I had gathered there. Unfortunately, as is usual with me, I had kept no record and made no notes, and impressions fade with the lapse of time and memory plays strange tricks. And yet those impressions were vivid enough and much has remained in my mind.and will remain, even though the stock of fresh horror and disaster overlays them. I could not finish, as I had intended, this writing down of past experiences. This is thus an unfinished fragment.

I

A year ago, or to be more accurate, a year and a week ago, on June 14th, 1938, we landed at Genoa. We had decided to go to Spain, Republican Spain, as quickly as we could manage it, and so we left immediately by air for Marseilles and flew over the winding and beautiful coast-line of the Riviera. Passport and police formalities had to be attended

there. The frontiers of our struggle lie not only in our own country but in Spain and China also.

Meanwhile millions of refugees starve in Republican Spain and women and children face not only the enemy bombs from the air but death through lack of food. India cannot remain indifferent to this terrible tragedy and we must make every effort to send them food and succour.

I congratulate those who have organised this performance and those who are taking part in it in order to aid the Spanish people in their dire distress. We can do little for these brave torch-bearers of freedom, but we can at least send them this tribute to their magnificent courage and to the cause to which they have offered their immeasurable sacrifice.

Homage to the Spanish Republic!

January 24, 1939

HOMAGE TO THE SPANISH REPUBLIC

In this age when black reaction grips the world, and culture and civilisation decay, and violence seems to reign unchecked, the magnificent struggles of the Spanish and Chinese Republics against overwhelming odds have lightened the darkness of many a wanderer through the pathless night. We sorrow for the incredible horrors that have taken place, but our hearts are full of pride and admiration for the human courage that has smiled through disaster and found greater strength in it, and for the invincible spirit of man that does not bend to insolent might, whatever the consequences. Anxiously we follow the fate of the people of Spain, and yet we know that they can never be crushed, for a cause that has this invincible courage and sacrifice behind it can never die. Madrid and Valencia and Barcelona will live for ever more, and out of their ashes the Spanish Republicans will yet build up the free Spain of their desire.

We who struggle for our own freedom are deeply moved by this epic struggle of the Spanish Republic for the freedom of the world is imperilled

too in Marseilles and without taking rest or food, we went to various offices there, being referred by one to the other. I had a special visa for Spain and we held a letter from the Spanish Government inviting us to visit them and charging their representatives to give us every facility and help.

Armed with these we thought that no difficulties would come our way. But we were mistaken, and hour after hour we rushed from one corner of Marseilles to another, from one bureau to a second one and then to a third, only to be sent on to yet another. We discovered that more photographs were necessary and so we searched for and found a photographer, who did the work in a few minutes with his automatic machine.

My visa for Spain was not good enough, I was told, by the lady in charge of one office. It was written in English and why should a French office take cognizance of the English language? I offered to translate the few words but the lady was adamant. So we went to the British Consulate and obtained another visa this time in French, and returned to the determined lady of the bureau. But, we were told, you have not paid the fee yet. We offered to do so and she smiled disdainfully at our ignorance. The fee had to be paid at some police office some miles away and the receipt for it

brought to the passports bureau.

We had to obey the voice of authority and to the police office we went and made payment and brought back the receipt in triumph. What, said the lady, you have only paid half the proper amount. This is not good enough. Evidently we had misunderstood her or somebody had made a mistake. There was no help for it but to go back wearily to the police office again. We had to hurry for the time for the closing of the bureau was very near.

At last the right sum was paid, the proper receipt obtained, and the lady of the bureau, taking pity at our distress, smiled at us and gave us the stamp of authority. She had kept her bureau open for us, though evening had crept in and all other offices had closed down for the day.

And now remained the Spanish Consulate, for its permission was also necessary, and there we went, fearing that it may have closed for the day. Closed it was, but the papers we had worked wonders and the locked doors opened and we were given warm welcome.

At last we had got what we wanted. Night was falling and we were tired out, hungry and sleepy. The Spanish Consul joined us at dinner but we were poor company and all we could think of was bed and sleep.

So ended our first day in Europe. The early dawn of the next day, at four-thirty in the morning, we hastened to the ærodrome to take the plane to Barcelona. The deep-blue Mediterranean lay under us and the coast line of Spain stretched out in the distance. Soon we were flying over Spanish soil and we tried to discover signs of war and destruction. There were none to be seen from that height and peace seemed to reign over the land.

We reached our destination, the air-port of Barcelona, a few miles from the city. Some mistake had been made, there was no one to meet us, and for a while we did not quite know what to do. After some waiting a motor bus carried us to the city. We passed between rich and smiling fields and occasionally there were houses in ruins by the road-side, apparently bombed from the air. But the aspect was peaceful and men and women were working in the fields.

Barcelona appeared in the distance, spread out along the sea coast and going right into the interior, clinging to the petty hills that dotted the landscape. It had a gracious appearance as it lay basking in the sunshine. Full of years and experience she seemed, with the burden of long history behind her, and yet strong and vital, smiling a warm welcome, despite her present sorrow, to the stranger who ap-

proached her.

We crept into her broad boulevards and the streets were full of people, laughing and gay, hurrying to their work or business. The trams, crowded with passengers, were going to and fro; the shops were open; the theatres and cinemas and concert-houses apparently flourished. Amazed, we looked at this moving scene of a great city's life. Was this the capital of a war government struggling for life against foreign invasion and domestic reaction, with the Fronts only a few miles away, and life hovering over the edge of death? Was this the city which was daily bombed from the air and which was continually facing death from the skies?

The evidence of war was obvious enough. Huge structures lay in ruins, exposing their charred interiors. Streets and pavements were torn up by the bombs that fell on them, and gaping chasms stared at us. The shops though open were poorly supplied and there were no luxury goods to be seen. Men's clothes and women's were old and often worn out. The soldier in uniform was everywhere in evidence. And though the people laughed, as Spaniards will, their faces were grave and pinched, and sorrow hung in the air. The women of Spain, wrapped in their mantillas, graceful and attractive as ever, with the smile lurking at the corner of their

mouths, had anxiety in their dark eyes. Hatless they went, for hats were unnecessary luxuries and they had abandoned them in token of their new freedom. But whether they were gay or sorrowful, there was pride in their looks and gait, and determination.

We reached our hotel, the Hotel Majestic, and telephoned immediately to the Foreign office. Very soon a young lady from the Ministry of Propaganda and Publicity came over to see us, profuse with apologies. Very efficient and charming she was, and she took charge of us and made arrangements for our stay and programme. During our brief stay in Barcelona she was our guide and friend and gave thought to every detail connected with our visit.

Five days we spent in this beautiful city, and five nights to the accompaniment of ærial bombardment. Five days and nights, crowded with events, and impressions, the memory of which will endure.

June 21, 1939

II

Was it only a year ago that I was in Spain? Ages have gone by since then with all their burden of shock and sorrow, and the counting of time by



Jawaharlal Nehru with the International Brigade in Spain

the passage of the sun and the moon seems a poor and unreal measure of the flood of emotions and experiences that add to our years. The men and women that I met in Spain, brave and gracious and vital, emblems of a nation's hope, are phantom figures today. Many are dead, many others are wandering refugees. But memory's storehouse is crowded by them and by the impressions I gathered during those brief days in Spain. Sometimes these impressions are so vivid that it seems but yesterday that I was there, and sometimes it seems a thousand years ago, and I feel old, very old. Time is a strange, elusive companion for us, but memory's tricks are stranger still, the haunting memory of things long forgotten, the sudden and fleeting glimpses into the world of the unconscious, the faint impress of the early days of the race and of humanity itself. Very old are we men, and the whisper of Eve's nightingales still sounds in our ears and dreams of Eden disturb us ; and the tragedies of past ages bear us down.

We met many people in Barcelona and the neighbourhood and some of them stand out, vivid and living pictures in the mind. And yet the individual lost significance in the mass phenomena that we saw. In the early days of the revolt, as we had read and were told, the Government and the

people were totally unprepared. Chaos reigned everywhere, government offices did not function, the army, such as it was, went to pieces. Yet behind this chaos there was a fierce will to resist and the people, unarmed or badly armed, hurled themselves at the advancing enemy. They put an end to the dreams of an easy victory which General Franco nourished, and checked his armies in many places. Madrid was saved by a supreme effort, and for two years the flag of the Republic proudly flew over its battlements, although the enemy occupied the outskirts and bombed the city almost daily.

But the checks could only be momentary unless they were backed by trained armies and munitions. The value of human courage and endurance is immeasurable, but, in terms of modern warfare, they cannot survive trained armies with their machine guns and tanks and bombing aircraft. So Franco's armies advanced. They consisted largely of Moorish troops and Italians and Germans, and were fed by a plentiful supply of munitions from Italy and Germany. Two highly efficient general staffs, the German and the Italian, controlled their major operations and supplied them with competent generalship. The problem before the Spanish Republican Government was to build up a new army

under peculiarly difficult circumstances, when they were fighting with their backs to the wall and were being harassed by the non-intervention policy of England and France. They had to organise government departments anew and to provide for food and clothing for the army and the people.

It was a vast problem even for peace time; with a life and death question going on, it seemed almost beyond human capacity. Yet the leaders of the Republic tackled it and, in spite of every difficulty and discouragement, stuck to it. Internal conflicts weakened them and delayed progress. When I reached Spain I saw the result of two years' continuous effort and it was an astonishing sight for me. The old chaos and comic opera situation had given place to the ordered functioning of an efficient government and a magnificent army had been built up almost out of nothing.

I visited many government offices and met the Ministers and heads of departments, though unfortunately I did not meet Senor Negrin, the Prime Minister, who was away in Madrid during my stay in Barcelona. These offices were humming with ordered activity, which is the sign of efficiency. There was no slackness visible or indolence, nor excited haste. The people in charge went about their business with a quiet enthusiasm. They were

often new to their tasks and their manner was different and more informal than that of an old civil servant who had become a part of the machine itself. But the changing circumstances required adaptability which the civil servant type seldom possesses. This adaptability they had, and what they lacked in experience they made up by their keenness at their work and their desire to get things done. After a few days' observation, it would be improper for me to pass judgment. But the general impression I gathered was one of surprising efficiency and coordination. There must have been, and indeed were, conflicts and failings, but they were not obvious on the surface.

The food problem was grave. There was the army to be fed, and the populations of great cities, and the vast number of refugees from Franco's territories. There was no milk to be seen or butter, and of both meat and vegetables and bread there was a lack. We could judge this by the kind of food we ourselves got as guests of the Government in the best hotel of Barcelona. Our breakfast consisted of a cup of black coffee with half a small roll of bread, without any other accompaniment. At lunch and dinner we had one meagre course accompanied by one green vegetable. Even potatoes were not to be had. If that was the lot of

the favoured ones, what of the others? A reception was given in our honour by the President or Speaker of the Cortes (the Spanish Parliament). The refreshments supplied consisted mainly of one or two varieties of sandwiches.

But though food was scarce and was growing scarcer, the army could not be kept hungry and their demands were first supplied. Next came the children who got such milk as there was. There were vast numbers of children among the refugees and scores of children's colonies had been established by the Government. We visited one of these, situated in a fine villa with a garden attached, and there we saw the children at work and play in pleasant surroundings. Many of them were orphans from distant parts of the country and shock and disaster had come to their homes and left their impress upon them. But the lady in charge of them knew her job well and, with gentleness and affection, she trained them to live their communal life in the colony. Little details were attended to in order to give an æsthetic background to the child. The rooms were simply but agreeably furnished, and even the bed-linen was cunningly devised to please the child.

Apart from the Children's Colonies or Homes, where children lived as at a boarding school, there

were Children's Dining Halls in some parts of the city where any child who came would be fed. Such establishments, we were told, were usually started by some organisation or by the soldiers at the Front, with the help of the Municipality. This, and such-like contacts, brought the new army very close to the people. We were fortunate in being present at the opening ceremony of one such Children's Dining Hall. Lister's famous division in the Army had fathered it and representative officers and men from the division with their band came to take part in the ceremony. The soldiers looked to the people to feed them; the soldiers, in their turn, wanted to help in feeding the children of the people. In this Dining Hall three thousand children could be fed daily.

The Dining Hall was a pleasant sight with cheerful decorations on the walls. Rows of girls neatly dressed in blue with white caps and aprons welcomed the guests and children that came. These girls were the voluntary workers who would serve the children in the Hall. Outside and inside the Hall, crowds of excited children stood by, full of animation and expectation.

The night before this ceremony, Barcelona had experienced three air raids and some of the bombs had fallen in that particular area, not far from the

new Children's Dining Hall whose opening we were witnessing.

June 30, 1939.

III

On our second day in Barcelona we left early in the morning for the Front and remained there till late in the evening. It was a two-hour drive, and armed with permits and accompanied by a Spanish officer, we had no difficulty in passing the numerous checking-places beyond which ordinary traffic was not allowed. The villages we passed through bore evident signs of war, but more significant than these visible emblems was the very atmosphere of the place. The air was heavy with that ominous quiet which apparently lies behind the battle line. Life is still there and does not run its normal course, and waits for the periodic outbursts of infernal noise.

We went to Lister's headquarters. We had heard a great deal of Lister and Modesto, two army commanders who had risen rapidly from the ranks and were now among the Republics most trusted generals. Next to General Miaja, the gallant defender of Madrid, these two appeared to be the best known and popular. Miaja was of the old

guard, a professional army officer who stuck to the Republic when a great part of the army rebelled. But Modesto and Lister were civilians at the time, following very modest and non-martial vocations. One was a tailor, the other a mason. They joined up when the call came for men for the new army to fight the Rebels and soon showed remarkable capacity. They rose by successive steps rapidly from the ranks and in two years' time, when I visited Spain, each of them was commanding a hundred thousand men and had a brilliant record of achievement in the war to his credit.

We just missed meeting Modesto and were sorry for this. But Lister we saw and spent the best part of the afternoon with him, sharing his frugal meal. He was an impressive person with a frank, attractive face; like that of a boy who has grown up quickly into manhood. A curious mixture of boyishness and grown-up-ness he was, his light-hearted and infectious laughter giving place to gravity. The responsibility on him was great and the burdens he had to carry heavy. From day to day he had to face difficult situations, and where the danger was greatest and the enemy were advancing, he or Modesto were hurried to confront them. Yet he did not lose his charm or gaiety and his whole bearing radiated self-confidence and as-

surance. He was the happy warrior whom nothing seemed to dismay and who was a pillar of strength when the outlook was darkest.

I watched him closely for I wanted to find out what these new officers of the popular army were like. We know the old military type, a stern disciplinarian, usually limited in intelligence and wedded to routine, living in the past and hating innovations which upset his conceptions of warfare. This type proved a dismal failure during the last Great War, but yet to a large extent he dominated armies. We know this type well in India and we often have to suffer platitudinous advice from him. Have we not been told often enough by him that it will take generations before Indians can grow up into his semblance (if they can ever reach these resplendent heights) and become senior officers. Alas for this old type which shines so much at polo and bridge and on the parade ground, but is so out of place today. He has had his day and has to give place to the mechanic and the engineer and the highbrow who understands the intricacies of modern mechanised warfare. He will have to give place to the soldier who does not form a superior class apart, far removed from the rank and file, but is the commander of popular forces, maintaining the discipline that is essential to an army, and yet one

in comradeship with those he commands.

It was this new type that I saw in Lister. He introduced me to many officers and took me to an officers' training school, and everywhere I sensed the new atmosphere of informality and comradeship and the strong binding link of a cause which they were pledged to defend. Yet there was discipline. In this school I noticed the care that was taken to give political education to the officers. Even after they left their school and joined their regiments this education was not neglected for each regiment had a political Commissar attached to it, whose advice on the political aspects of any question that arose was always sought by the Commander. It was the business of the Commissar to keep up the morale of the troops.

One of the most notable feats of the Spanish Republic was to build up within two years a very fine army with thousands of competent officers. If the Republic failed in the end, it was not this army that failed. It was hunger that killed it and the treachery of England and France. The old officers, with a few notable exceptions like Miaja, proved unreliable and incompetent, as in the case of China. Many of the defeats were due to these old officers, but as the new popular type of officer grew in numbers, the army stiffened. One thing the new officers

lacked and that was long training in strategy. Their school-house was too often the battlefield itself. They learned much from this and improved rapidly, but for the superior officers it was a much more difficult task to get used to the quick handling of masses of men as the fortunes of a battle changed and new situations developed. Therein they could not compare with the highly trained German and Italian staffs which directed operations on Franco's side.

This was a serious handicap to the Republic but it got over it progressively and out of the crowd of its officers, some exceptionally able men, like Modesto and Lister, were thrown out. As against this handicap, the Republic had a far superior rank and file and more competent and eager officers of middle rank. Given enough food and munitions there can be no doubt that the new Republican army would have triumphed over Franco's professionals and experts, in spite of their German and Italian staffs and superiority in heavy armaments and aircraft.

I was greatly impressed by this new army and its training. We were taken then to see the International Brigade which had won so much fame during the war. This had been originally composed entirely of foreign volunteers, but when I visited

them, sixty per cent of them were Spaniards. The Republican Government was discouraging foreign volunteers from joining as their object was to demonstrate that they were contending against an invasion of Spain by outsiders—Germans and Italians and Moors—and were not fighting in a civil war in which foreign elements were merely assisting. Always, in Barcelona, the war was referred to as an invasion and not as a civil war.

We could not easily trace the International Brigade. It was extraordinary that while large armies were encamped in the neighbourhood, they were not visible and the countryside seemed almost deserted, except for small groups of soldiers or sentries and a military lorry rushing by. The aeroplane had made all the difference and the fear of bombing was a sufficient inducement for avoiding all public display. So the troops lived and worked under cover and their guns were camouflaged. The hill-side was swarming with them but only the trees and the shrubs were visible from a short distance.

The International Brigade was spread out over a wide area and we had no time to visit each section of it. We went to the British and American battalions, and once we had spotted them, we found large numbers of soldiers on the sides of the hills

and in the valley below. They were camping under most primitive conditions and had made temporary huts out of mud and shrubs, or had dug out a small shelter. There was nothing in the way of comfort, and yet they were the jolliest crowd I have come across. Their spirits were infectious and watching their enthusiasm and determination, it was difficult to conceive that the cause they served could ever lose.

We talked to many of them. They had come as volunteers from distant places, drawn by that strange attraction for serving a cause which has moved men and women throughout the ages. They had left their families and homes, their work and and their comforts, and of their own free will chosen this hard life with danger as their constant companion and death a frequent visitor. As I watched them laugh and play, my mind travelled back to two years of warfare and the proud record of this Brigade during these terrible years of misfortune and disaster. They had saved the Republic many a time and thousands of them lay buried in the soil of Spain. How many of those light- hearted youths I saw would never return to their homes again and their loved ones would wait for them in vain?

Only a few days after I saw them, they were

in the battle-line again, and a little later, they were rushed to the Ebro to stem the fierce onslaught of Franco's armies. Many remained there for ever, among them some whom I remembered as having taken my autograph.

Reluctantly I came away from these gallant men of the International Brigade, for something in me wanted to stay on this inhospitable looking hill-side which sheltered so much human courage, so much of what was worthwhile in life.

We were taken away to the headquarters of a Spanish Brigade. It was Modesto's I think, although Modesto was not there at the time. In our honour all the officers had gathered together and we feasted on simple fare. It was difficult to remember in that cheerful company that the battle-line was not far and an unwelcome bomb might disturb our harmony. The toast of India and of Indian freedom was drunk after a happy speech by a Spanish officer. I replied in a few words of thanks and of goodwill to the Republic and its fine army.

And so back in the star-light to Barcelona.

July 7, 1939.

IV

Lister was one of the outstanding men we met in Spain. Yet another was Senor Del Vayo, then the Foreign Minister of the Republic. Soon after our arrival in Barcelona we went to call on him, and on subsequent days we met on several occasions. He was not the usual type of diplomat, reserved and suave, afraid of saying anything definite, with a long training in the arts of diplomacy behind him. He was a journalist and a writer whom the Revolution had thrown up into the front rank of public life and he carried something of the journalist still about him. His ability was undoubted, but what struck me most was his vitality and determination. In Madrid and Barcelona and in Geneva, he had fought for the Republic against all odds and tried to counter the tortuous devices of "non-intervention." During the dark days of March 1938 and when the long-drawn-out battle of the Ebro was taking place in the summer of 1938, he had been a rock and a lighthouse for the people of the Republic. Next to Dr. Negrin, the Prime Minister, he was the key-man of the Government. These two never lost heart or courage or nerve whatever disaster or misfortune confronted their cause. Seldom has the Head of

a State shown such superb nerve as when Dr. Negrin, at the height of the Ebro offensive, went off to attend a scientists' congress in Zurich.

Del Vayo and I had long talks with each other and he explained to me the position in Spain with frankness, not ignoring or minimising his difficulties. In a military sense he was satisfied with the progress made by the new Army, but there was a lack of good staff work. Many of their defeats and retirements were due, apart of course from the great superiority of the enemy in air-craft and mechanical equipment and big guns, to inexperience of the Republican generals in large-scale operations, and sometimes to deliberate sabotage on the part of the old officers who had been employed by the Republic. This sabotage was more harmful than the inexperience; it was growing less as the officers of the new army gradually replaced the doubtful ones. Inexperience was often a costly business, but experience was being purchased on the field of battle and mistakes were fewer. The new army increased in efficiency from day to day and, from this point of view, time was a factor in favour of the Republic.

A few weeks after my visit to Spain, Franco's armies launched with all their strength, and in full cooperation with their German and Italian allies,



a fierce offensive on the Ebro. This Battle of the Ebro lasted for several weeks and was one of the major battles of modern times. But our standards of measurement have grown today and the battle has become just an incident in a minor war. In this Battle of the Ebro, the Republican Army thoroughly justified itself and proved itself superior to Franco's. In spite of lack of air-craft and munitions, it held the oft-repeated assaults of massed armies supported by air-craft.

Del Vayo was not worried about the army. He was worried about the supply of munitions and, even more so, of food. The coming winter was a critical period for food. Food and munitions very largely depended on the policy of England and France, and the Governments of these two countries had been consistently, in the name of non-intervention, following a policy of strangling the Republic and indirectly aiding Franco.

Munich and all that followed was yet to come and our senses had not then been completely dulled by repeated betrayal and mendacity. But the farce of this 'non-intervention' was an astonishing thing and showed up how rotten were the standards and methods of international affairs. Non-intervention in Spain was the parent of Munich.

Del Vayo did not use a hard word about Franco before me. He dismissed him airily as a tool of the Nazis and Fascists, who were the real enemies and invaders of his country. Even about Germany and Italy he was not bitter. But there was no lack of bitterness when he talked of the British and French Governments who, under the guise of friendship, were doing so much to kill Republican Spain. Especially bitter he was against Mr. Chamberlain's Government for he considered the French Government to be completely under the influence of Downing Street. Del Vayo told me that, although he could not say so publicly, he and his Government were being compelled to consider the British Government as an unfriendly one, aiding the enemy. Within a few days of our talk, the French Government, at the instance of the British, closed the Pyrenese frontier—a fatal step, intended to appease Mussolini, which did more harm to the Republican cause than any battle that Franco had won.

We talked of India also, Del Vayo and I, and I presented him with our National Flag. Several months later, in that fateful last week of September, when Mr. Chamberlain and his umbrella were carrying appeasement by air to Godesberg, I met Del Vayo again in Geneva. The food problem

was growing acute and he begged of me to help in sending food supplies from India. My last glimpse of him was at the midnight hour in a famous cafe in Geneva where politicians and journalists congregate to discuss the latest news and the latest scandal in high politics. They have plenty of material since 'appeasement' descended upon us to put in shade the franker intrigues of the days of Machiavelli.

The third arresting personality that I met in Spain was that of Dolores, popularly known as Passionaria. I had often heard of her and was anxious to meet her. She had been unwell and we paid a visit to her little chamber. For an hour or so we were with her and we had to converse through an interpreter. Her extraordinary vitality overwhelmed me and I felt that she was one of the most remarkable women I had met. She was a miner's daughter from the Basque country, middle-aged and homely looking, the mother of grown-up children. Her face was pleasant and genial. It was a happy matron's face, smiling easily, and yet behind it lay the infinite sorrow of her class and her nation. In repose her face was restful but with a hint of turmoil beneath the surface. And then she would begin to speak. Impassioned words would pour out of her lips, tumbling over each

other, her face would be lighted up by the fire within, and her fine eyes would sparkle and hold you. I heard her in a little room, only understanding part of what she was saying in Spanish, but the music of her language filled me, and her changing face and eyes were full of meaning. I understood then the power that she wielded over the Spanish masses. If, I wondered, she could thus impress me, who am not easily impressed, what effect would she have on a mass audience of her own people?

A month or so later I met Passionaria in Paris and I saw her address a great meeting. She spoke in Spanish and the audience was overwhelmingly French and could not easily follow her. But she held that great audience as few orators could have done, and when the meeting was over, there was an endless succession of women and girls and sometimes men, who came with flowers for her in their hands or gifts for Spain. Their tear-laden eyes were full of love for her and often they broke down when she embraced them and bade them be of good cheer. There she stood, the symbol of Spain's agony and Spain's unconquerable spirit. But she was much more than a national symbol. She personified to that vast multitude the sorrow in their own lives and the hope of ending that sor-

row. She was the symbol of the common man and woman who had suffered and been exploited for ages and were now determined to be free.

July 12, 1939.

ERNST TOLLER

ERNST TOLLER

Ernst Toller is dead, killed by his own hand. His hand may have done the deed, but he was done to death by that malignant spirit of brutal violence which reigns in Europe today under the names of Fascism and Nazism. How many murders, and that crushing of the soul that is worse than murder, stand to its credit during the long nightmare of the past six years! For the idealist and the sensitive in spirit the world grows more and more difficult to endure, the wide spaces narrow down and enclose and stifle, and escape comes often only through death. Those of them that are fortunate die fighting for their ideals against the evil that oppresses them. But real tragedy comes to those for whom life has lost all purpose, all meaning, all hope.

Toller was a rare spirit, gentle and sensitive, with the genius of a poet and with a poet's prophetic insight at times, who found the growing violence and the crushing of freedom an intolerable burden. Those who knew him loved him as a dear and precious comrade, but scores of thousands

came to know him intimately through his writings, his brilliant plays, his moving letters from prison, his sad autobiography—"I was a German". Right through these books of his the reader saw the inner struggles that shook him, the reactions of a sorrow-laden world on a sensitive poet's mind meant for song and joy. Hater of violence in all its forms, his mind struggled with the problem that faces all of us, how to meet the violence of the oppressor and the tyrant without indulging in the hated violence ourselves. Gradually, and with painful processes of thought, he came to the conclusion that violence against the aggressor was not only justified but necessary to prevent the collapse of what he valued. Writer of winged words and phrases in the German language that he loved, he came to believe that the eloquence of the pen has sometimes to give place to the eloquence of the sword in defence of freedom, lest freedom itself die and all eloquence perish. He himself did not take to the sword, but his sympathies went out to those who were fighting for freedom and all his energy was spent in helping their cause.

I met him for the first time twelve years ago in Brussels. A little while before he had come out of prison where the German Social Democratic Government had kept him for five years. His

fine, young and sensitive face bore the well-known impress of prison and lines of sorrow crossed it. Yet there was much to live for, much to do, and he was full of vitality and love of work for the cause he held dear.

Seven years later I met him again, an exile from his native land, living on sufferance in other countries. He was a Jew and there was no room for Jews in Hitler's Germany. Yet this Jew was such that later he wrote to me that he entirely agreed with what I had written in favour of the Arabs in Palestine. He had married a charming German girl.

Again I saw him many times during last summer in England and France. Munich and the betrayal of Czecho-Slovakia hit him hard and the shadows deepened on his face. Yet there was something to live for, there was Spain fighting magnificently against the barbarian hordes of Fascism. Not the old Spain, but as Spain's great poet Antonio Machado, who died of a broken heart the day after the fall of Barcelona, wrote:

> But another Spain is born,
> A Spain of the chisel and the roller,
> With that eternal youth which springs
> Of the tough past of the race.

A Spain implacable and redeemer,
A Spain that dawns
With axe in hand ;
The Spain of Fury and of the Idea.

So for Spain he laboured feverishly, forgetting his piled-up sorrows in the work in hand. Food was urgently needed, food for innumerable refugees and women and children, food for the hard days of winter. He travelled to America and to various countries in Europe, he pleaded passionately with Presidents and Prime Ministers for government help for the refugees, he addressed popular audiences, he pursued members of Parliament and editors of newspapers, full of this one idea. For Spain was not Spain only but the new world locked in a death struggle with the barbarian hordes of reaction and brutal violence.

Alas for that new Spain that did not survive the winter, murdered by those who spoke fair words to her and prated about democracy and freedom. Franco's victory parade passes by in that great city which so proudly and for so long held him at bay, and tearful eyes turn away remembering, with a breaking of the heart, the million men and women who sought to prevent this and now lie under the soil of Spain. But the Ambassador

of Britain's Government goes to pay tribute to Franco and to greet this parade of victory.

Alas for Ernst Toller, dear friend and comrade, who died heartbroken at the perishing of his last hope. The world of Fascism was too brutal for his sensitive spirit, too coarse for his fine nature. But it was democratic England and democratic France with their false promises and betrayals and stabs in the back that broke him.

May 24, 1939.

THE MUNICH CRISIS, 1938

GENEVA—SEPTEMBER 20, 1938

Lac Leman, the Lake of Geneva, how peaceful and beautiful it looks! Steamers puff away towards Lausanne carrying tourists and sightseers. A huge jet of water seems to come out of the lake itself and rises high into the sky. In the background, Mount Saleve dominates the City of Geneva, and further back still rise the snowy peaks of Mont Blanc. Hotels line the quayside with the flags of many nations fluttering in the breeze. Huge autobuses loaded with tourists dash down the streets.

Further up there is the Palais Wilson, the old home of the League of Nations. A little beyond is the solid pile of the International Labour Office, and further still rises in all its aggressive and massive grandeur the brand new Palace of the League.

But the beauty and the peace of the lake and the city attract little notice; for one thought fills the minds of all. What does Czechoslovakia say? What is happening in London? What in Paris, in Prague, in New York? People ask each other for the latest news, and rumour and conjecture

have a happy field. Depression reigns supreme. The League Assembly is sitting, but who cares for it? Geneva does not count, the League is dead. Prague counts and London, Paris, Moscow and, of course, the mountain retreat of Hitler. The Palace of the League looks like a mausoleum built to honour the dead body of peace and collective security. While Europe quivers with excitement and hovers between peace and war, the League Assembly does not even refer to the vital issue.

Is it peace or war? What answer have the Czechs given? The British and French Governments have betrayed Czechoslovakia and thrown her to the Nazi wolves. Will the British and French people submit tamely to this treachery?

The Rumanian delegate says in a loud voice, in the hearing of a group of French delegates, "Czechoslovakia will live, it is France that dies." The Frenchmen get red in the face.

Monsieur Blum is reported to have said that he is torn between conflicting emotions—his overmastering desire to have peace and his shame at what is being done. "Very good of you, Monsieur Blum," says another Frenchman, "but we are not interested in your psychological reactions. We are interested in Democracy, in Czechoslovakia."

Message from London. The Czech Government has accepted the Hitler-Chamberlain-Daladier proposals in principle. Depression. But someone says this is all British propaganda.

Another message. The British Labour movement has denounced the Chamberlain policy and is meeting the C. G. T. (the French Labour Confederation) to-morrow to devise a common plan of action. Bravo!

News from Prague. The Cabinet is still sitting. It has sat all night. No decision has been reached yet.

Message from Berlin. There has been a clash between Germans and Czechs near the frontier. Another message, vast concentrations of German troops on the Czech frontier.

An English delegate to the League tries to justify his Government's policy. It is very distressing, very painful, but there was no other way out. Hitler was on the point of marching into Czechoslovakia. His air force was ready to bomb Prague. Something had to be done and Chamberlain bravely did it. It is true that this means sabotaging democracy and the League and betraying the Czechs. But peace at least is preserved. For how long? And is it after all preserved? What if Hitler demanded a British Colony under threat

of war? Would not Britain fight then? Of course. So that the possession of a colony was far more important to the British Government than democracy and the League Covenant and solemn promises and assurances, and the fate of gallant Czechoslovakia.

Telephone from New York. There has been a great protest meeting condemning the betrayal of the Czechs. Good. But the Americans protest only from a high moral plane. Will they do anything else?

Someone says that the surest way for a country to commit suicide is to seek the friendship and protection of England and France. These Governments are sure to play false and betray.

The Russian delegates look grim. The Czechs are too unhappy to say anything. The Spaniards are not lacking in words. "We know all this, we have had experience of this", they say. "We relied on our own stout right arms and we shall win through and save democracy."

What is the latest news? What is happening? Newspapermen rush about telephoning to Prague, London, Paris, and rumours fly bringing a measure of depression or elation in turn. The Czechs will never give in—the Czechs have surrendered. But, no. Benesh is a clever man and he will not

allow himself to be caught. If the Czech Government surrenders, it will fall immediately and give place to another. Hitler demands the resignation of Benesh.

Midnight. Cafe Bavaria, the haunt of diplomats and journalists. A foreign Minister is there and crowds of delegates to the League, and editors, journalists and many hangers-on of the League. Beer and coffee are consumed and there is continuous talk and argument. Behind it all a tension, even hard-boiled journalists showing nerves.

What has Prague decided? What of London and Paris? Resentment rising in London. In Paris the Chamber of Deputies is meeting tomorrow. The French Government may fall. Already a new Premier is mentioned. In London Parliament is meeting. Labour is getting aggressive. Tempers are going up everywhere, although newspapers keep the soft pedal on.

Telephones ringing continuously. Hello Prague! Hello Paris! What is the latest news? Is it war or peace?

News from Prague. The Government has invoked the Treaty of Locarno and claim arbitration under its terms. Germany had agreed to this and Hitler subsequently had confirmed it.

Bravo! Clever step. Benesh is no fool. He

has put the British and the French Governments in a hole. What will they say to this? What will Hitler say? A Swedish delegate says that he was one of the arbitrators appointed in Locarno.

Chamberlain to go to Hitler again day after to-morrow. He is becoming quite good at carrying messages by air. Perhaps his little tea-party will not come off after all.

Hello Prague? Hello Paris? Hello London? Is it peace or war? and so to September 21, 1938. Is it peace or war?

September 21, 1938.

LONDON IN SUSPENSE

September 28, 1938

After the mysterious happenings behind the scenes of the past few weeks, the journeying to and fro, the appeals and the ultimatums, the mounting danger of war, Mr. Neville Chamberlain at last was to make a public pronouncement. He spoke through the radio and I listened in to his broadcast. It was brief, hardly lasting eight minutes, and there was nothing that was new in what he said. It was an appeal to sentiment after the Baldwin manner, but lacking the Baldwin touch and personality. It struck me as singularly ineffective. There was no reference to the vital issues at stake, to the naked sword that was being flashed before the world and terrorising humanity, to the way of violence that was becoming the law of nations and which Mr. Chamberlain himself had been encouraging by his activities. There was hardly a mention of the proud and gallant nation that was being offered as a sacrifice to the blood lust of the beasts of prey that surrounded it. The reference to it was a disparaging one—'a far-away

country of whose people we know nothing.' No hint at the dignity and courage and love of peace and freedom and calm determination and tremendous sacrifices of these far-away people, who had been coerced and abandoned so faithlessly by their friends. Nothing was said of the incessant threats and insults and lies that had flown unceasingly from Nazi quarters. Only a brief, apologetic reference to Herr Hitler's "unreasonableness."

I felt depressed and my heart was heavy within me. Was virtue always to be treated so, unless it was accompanied by the big battalion? Was evil ever to triumph?

I thought that perhaps Mr. Chamberlain would do greater justice to his theme the next day in Parliament. Perhaps, at last, he would give credit where it was due, and speak the truth without fear of Herr Hitler. Zero hour was approaching; it was time that the truth was out. But at the back of my mind I did not believe this for Mr. Chamberlain's past stood up before me and was witness to his partiality for fascism and its works.

Meanwhile there was a digging of trenches in the parks and open spaces, and anti-air-craft guns were being mounted. A. R. P.—air-raid precautions—stared at us from every hoarding, and in innumerable improvised depots men and women

tried on gas masks, true emblems in all their ugliness of this savage age of violence. People went about their businesses, but their faces were strained and full of apprehension. There was sorrow in many homes as their loved ones were summoned to put themselves in readiness for the coming war.

The hours slipped by and brought the dread moment nearer, when, at the mad bidding of one man, millions of inoffensive, kindly and well-meaning men would rush at each other and kill and destroy. The guns would thunder and belch out fire, and the whirr of the bombing aeroplanes would fill the sky. Zero hour. Would it be to-morrow or the day after?

Would this world of the twenty-eight of September, nineteen thirty-eight ever be like this again?

> Once more we hear the word,
> That sickened earth of old:
> "No law except the sword
> Unsheathed and uncontrolled."

I am pressed by people to get a gas mask. The idea seems ridiculous to me. Am I to go about with a snout and the appearance of a beast? I am not adverse to risk and danger and a few days in Barcelona gave me some taste of

air-raids. I do not believe in the efficacy of gas masks and if danger comes, the mask will be poor protection. Perhaps its main purpose is to give confidence to the wearer and keep up public morale. No one knows how he will function face to face with extreme danger, yet I imagine that I shall not easily lose my head.

Still the curiosity to see a gas mask at close quarters overcomes me and I decided to go to one of the A. R. P. Depots. I am fitted and later fetch a gas mask.

President Roosevelt has sent another message to Herr Hitler—a dignified, moving appeal in which the real point at issue is stressed. What a vast difference between what he says and how he says it and Mr. Neville Chamberlain's pronouncements ! Even the printed word of President Roosevelt shows that there is a man behind it. What does reason matter or fear of consequences to Hitler ? Is Hitler absolutely mad that he should risk his astonishing diplomatic victory, obtained no doubt under threat of violence, by plunging into war ? Does he not know that defeat and disaster will certainly be his lot in a world war ; that many of his own people will turn against him ? Or perhaps he has taken the true measure of Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier and knows exactly how

far they can go.

The streets leading to the Houses of Parliament are crowded and there is excitement in the air. Inside the House every space is occupied and the visitors' galleries are overfull. The Lords are present in full force. They look a very bourgeois crowd indistinguishable from humbler mortals. There sits Lord Baldwin next to the Duke of Kent. On the other side of him are Lord Halifax and the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Diplomats gallery is crowded. The Russian "Charge d'Affaires" is there and the Czechoslovakian Minister, M. Masaryk, son of a famous father who built up the Czechoslovakian nation. Is the son going to see the destruction of the noble edifice that the father erected?

The Prime Minister begins. He has not a striking appearance; there is no nobility in his countenance. He looks too much like a business man. His delivery is fair. For an hour he speaks, a bald narrative with occasional personal touches and words that give a glimpse of suppressed excitement. Somehow I feel (or is it my imagination) that the man was not big enough for the task he undertook, and this complex comes out repeatedly in his words and manner. He is excited and proud about his personal intervention, his

talks with Hitler, the part he is playing in world affairs. Though Prime Minister of Britain, he is not used to these high tasks and the intoxication of the adventure fills him. A Palmerston or a Gladstone or a Disraeli would have risen to the occasion. A Campbell-Bannerman would have put some fire in what he said. A Baldwin might have gripped the House, so would have Churchill in a different way. Even Asquith would have spoken with a dignity suited to the occasion. But there was neither warmth, nor depth of intellect in what Mr. Chamberlain said. It was very evident that he was not a man of destiny.

My thoughts flew to his meeting with Hitler and I thought how overwhelmed he must have been by Hitler, overwhelmed not only by the frequent ultimatums of the latter, but by the dynamic and passionate and somewhat neurotic personality. For Hitler, for all his evil bent and distorted intent, has something elemental about him and Mr. Chamberlain is of the earth, earthy. But even Mr. Chamberlain could have met that elemental force with another force, also elemental but far more powerful, the force of organised democracy, the will of millions of people. He did not possess that power, nor did he seek to possess it. He moved in his narrow sphere and thought in limited

terms, and never tried to develop or represent the urge that moves millions. It was inevitable, under the circumstances, that in the clash of wills he must go down before Hitler.

But was there even a clash of will? There was no hint of such real clash in what Mr. Chamberlain said, as there had been none in his deeds. He approached Hitler with sympathy and a large measure of approval and agreement. There was no talk of high principles, of freedom, of democracy, of human right and justice, of international law and morality, of the barbarity of the way of the sword, of the sickening lies and vulgarity of the high priests of Nazism, of the unparalleled coercion of minorities in Germany, of refusal to submit to blackmail and bullying. On principles there was hardly any dispute, only some details were discussed. It is evident that Mr. Chamberlain's outlook, allowing for his English environment, was not so different from Hitler's.

In that long speech of his there was much in praise of Hitler, of his sincerity, of belief in his bonafides, of his promise not to seek further territory in Europe. There was no mention of President Roosevelt and his striking messages. There was no mention of Russia, although Russia is intimately concerned with the fate of Czechoslovakia.

And what of Czechoslovakia herself? There was mention of course, but not a word about the unparalleled sacrifices of her people, of their astonishing restraint and dignity in face of intolerable provocation, of their holding aloft the banner of democracy. It was an astonishing and significant omission, deliberately made.

Mr. Chamberlain's speech held the audience. Not because of the excellence of the argument or the personality of the speaker, but because of the vital importance of the subject. He led up to a dramatic conclusion. He was going to Munich tomorrow and so were Signor Mussolini and M. Daladier. And as a great favour Hitler had made a striking concession—he would defer mobilisation for 24 hours!

Mr. Chamberlain succeeded in rousing the House by this element of drama and by the hope it brought of the possible avoidance of war. The strain of the last few days lessened and relief appeared in all the faces.

It was good that war had been pushed off, even though this might be only for a day or two longer. It was terrible to contemplate that war and any relief from it was welcome.

And yet, and yet, what of Czechoslovakia, what of democracy and freedom? Was there

going to be another betrayal again, the final murder of that nation? This sinister gathering of four at Munich, was it the prelude to the Four-Power Pact of Fascism-cum-Imperialism to isolate Russia, to end Spain finally and to crush all progressive elements? Mr. Chamberlain's past record inevitably makes one think so.

So tomorrow Chamberlain meets Hitler and Mussolini. One was too much for him, what will be his fate with these two strong men? Perhaps Mr. Chamberlain and Monsieur Daladier will, under cover of intricate words, agree to everything that Hitler says, and then, as another of his great favours, Hitler will consent to postpone war by a few days or weeks. That will indeed be a great triumph and Hitler ought to be hailed then as the prophet of peace. The Nobel Peace Prize might still be awarded to him, though Mr. Chamberlain will be a hot competitor.

INDIA AND THE CRISIS

The past weeks of crisis and disaster have shaken all of us up. War was happily avoided for the moment, but disaster came nevertheless, and the future is dark with possibilities of war and something that is worse even than war. When the time of trial came in Europe, it was obvious that the forces of real peace and progress were not strong enough or determined enough to face the issue. It was not the enemy abroad that mattered so much, but his reactionary allies at home, who stabbed democracy and freedom from behind, and thus insured the triumph of brutal reaction and violence in Europe. Perhaps what moved these reactionary governments in so-called democratic countries was not fear of defeat but fear of victory, for that victory would have been a victory of real democracy and possibly an end of fascism in Europe. Fascism had to be kept going in Europe, whatever the cost. That cost has been a heavy one and the bills will continue to be presented and paid till disaster overwhelms the world.

The people of India have followed the course

of events with pain and anguish. Wedded to peace and democratic freedom, they have watched the complete surrender of democracy with shock after shock of surprise. They have one consolation. They were no parties to this betrayal and dishonour.

Today the prestige of England and France has vanished utterly from all over the East. Unfortunately even the progressive forces in these countries have suffered because of this and little reliance is placed on them. When crisis came they failed to make any impression or even to pull together, and even now the lesson has not been sufficiently learnt. India feels more than ever that the only way to gain her objective of independence is by her own organised strength and will to freedom, through such sacrifices as may be demanded of her. She is not weak today; she is self-reliant and is conscious of her growing strength, and she has learnt not to surrender to evil or to superior physical might, whatever the consequences.

Inevitably we shall rely on ourselves but it is foolish to think on narrow national lines in this world today, especially after Munich and the triumphant domination of fascism over Europe. If the progressive forces all over the world cannot even now pull together they are doomed to annihi-

lation and they will deserve that doom. Therefore India must necessarily pursue this policy of co-operation with those who stand for freedom. What will others do?

Recent events have demonstrated with startling clarity that freedom is indivisible. We cannot have a static world in which freedom and democracy exist in some parts and a total denial of freedom in other parts. There will be conflict between the two, for the very presence of democratic freedom is an offence in the eyes of fascism and ultimately undermines it. Therefore there is a continuous attempt by fascism to put an end to free conditions in other countries. This can either be met by a policy of surrender and a progressive suppression of liberties or by facing aggression and refusing to submit to it. The policy of the British Government is apparently the former one, or perhaps this is not surrender for them as they themselves approve of fascism. This simply cannot be the policy of those who care for freedom and democracy. What are these to do?

"To resist is to conquer" is the slogan of the Spanish Republic and they have lived up magnificently to that slogan. Alone in Europe, they have shown that democracy, if it so wills, can defend itself successfully even against overwhelming odds.

Powerful States have collapsed and proud empires have been humbled by methods of gangsterism. But the people of Spain stand unconquered and unsubdued, and out of the very horror they have gone through, they have built up a new Spain which fills all friends of democracy with hope.

If we are to face fascism, it is in that spirit that we have to do it. To hold hard to our principles and to freedom and to refuse to surrender, even unto death. But if we compromise with those principles, and carry on our own imperialism while we combat fascism, we lose both friends and supporters as well as all the strength and enthusiasm that comes from fighting for a worthy cause. If England really fought for democracy, she would have the world's sympathy and support. But who would sympathise with an imperialist England fighting to keep her colonies?

The weakness of England and France during the recent crisis was their imperialism. Imperialism cannot champion democracy; it cannot fight fascism effectively as at heart it sympathises with it. The Empire of England, as that of France, will fade away before long but if the present policy continues they will not only end but end in further dishonour and will give place to fascist empires.

Collective security was meant to check violent

aggression on the part of nations. It has failed, because, it had an imperialist basis; and so long as that foundation endures, it will not function effectively. And yet collective security is essential if a rational and peaceful world order is to be evolved.

A new Europe is rising up before our eyes, a new world, and we have to understand them and adjust ourselves accordingly. Events are marching ahead and changing the shape of things as we have known them. There seems to be too much of the frightened and helpless spectator about the champion of freedom and democracy in Europe today. He has lost all initiative and can only bemoan his lot. It is time that this defeatist attitude was ended and the issues faced squarely and action taken.

The spread of fascism must be countered both at home and abroad. It can only be checked by encouraging democracy everywhere and placing our reliance on it. As an Indian I desire passionately the freedom of India and I shall go on working for it. But I feel now more than ever that this is necessary from the wider international viewpoint, in order to combat fascism. Only a free and democratic India can help democracy elsewhere. A subject India dominated by imperialism will be a burden which ever grows heavier and thus

weakens the democratic front. British imperialism is now facing a difficult problem of its own creation in Palestine, and a sorry mess they have made of it. They will not solve it by methods of terrorism. They will not solve any of their imperialist problems by coercion. This policy will only lead to their own weakening and the strengthening of fascist elements in those countries, as we see in the Arab world today. And India is a much vaster undertaking than little Palestine.

The only possible policy, if Britain believes in democracy, is to shed imperialism utterly and rapidly and replace it by free democratic institutions in these countries, which, instead of weakening it, will then be powerful allies. An independent democratic India will be a tower of strength against fascism in Europe or Asia.

There is no other effective way of holding fascism or of building up collective security. The old method has collapsed and to cling on to it with all its inner contradictions is to invite repeated disaster. All the armaments that Britain can build up will not give her sufficient strength to face the perils that will come, if she has feet of clay and bases herself on a rebellious empire. That armament itself might well be used ultimately for the further crushing of democracy in Europe and even

in England.

To ask India to accept present conditions and to co-operate with Britain in sustaining a vanishing democracy, is to refuse to understand the mind and temper of India or the march of events in Europe. We must look things straight and get out of the mental ruts which have brought so much evil in their train. India believes in freedom and democracy and wants to give her support to any system that insures them. She holds out her hand of fellowship to all who believe in them in England or elsewhere. But only a free India can do so, and Indian freedom thus becomes a vital factor in world politics.

October 23, 1938.

INDIA AND ENGLAND

Two and a half years ago I visited England and met many people here belonging to various parties and groups. They showed a courteous interest in the Indian problem and expressed sympathy for our cause. I appreciated the courtesy and welcomed the sympathy.

And yet, inevitably, I attached no great importance to either, for I was fully conscious of the indifference and apathy to India of people generally and even of those whose business it is to consider such problems.

I found a general desire not to think about India, to shirk the issue. It was too complicated and in a world full of troubles, why add to them? The Government of India Act had just been passed and, unsatisfactory as it was, it had one merit at least. It postponed the issue for a while and gave an excuse for not thinking about it.

I was not disappointed for I had not expected much more, and for many years we had trained ourselves in India not to rely on others but to develop our own strength. I went back to India.

Our problem did not vanish because people in England were not thinking about it. It grew and we grew with it.

Meanwhile, the international situation became ever more critical and we came to realise that the Indian problem was a part of this world problem and that we in India could make a difference if crisis or war came. That realisation has grown with us and with others and has raised the Indian national struggle for independence to the international plane.

During my present visit to England I have again had the privilege of meeting old friends and new and spoken about India to numerous gatherings.

I found still a certain apathy and considerable ignorance, and inevitably the urgent problems of Spain and China and Central Europe absorbed attention. And yet I found a vital difference and a new and more realistic way of looking at the Indian problem.

Perhaps this was due to a realisation of the great strength of the Indian national movement to-day, perhaps to the gravity of the international situation and the apprehension that India might add to the danger of it when crisis came. Perhaps this very gravity, this sense

of impending catastrophe, had forced people out of the old mental ruts and made them think afresh in terms of reality.

For the reality is this: that India wants, and is determined to achieve, full independence; that the problem of our appalling poverty clamours for solution, and that this will not be solved till the people of India have power in their hands to shape their political and economic destiny as they will and without interference from outside; that the organised strength of the Indian people has grown greatly in recent years and it is difficult for outside authority to check for long their march to freedom; that the international situation indirectly helps greatly the Indian national movement.

Even the Conservative die-hard has to acknowledge that this in essence is a true analysis of the Indian situation. India is bound to achieve her independence, preferably with the goodwill of others, but even if that goodwill is denied her. And so almost everybody to-day talks in terms of Indian independence.

Looked at in this perspective, the questions of Provincial Autonomy and Federation become minor issues in a larger context. They may, of course, provoke a major conflict, but the real

question is, and will remain, independence, and every step we may take, every tactic we might adopt, will be considered and decided with reference to this question alone. Does it strengthen us and bring independence within our grasp?

If obstruction is offered, if attempts are made to impose anything on us, our reaction is bound to be hostile. The result ultimately will be the same, for forces beyond human control are working to that end, but that result may be one brought about in friendliness and goodwill and leading to friendship and co-operation, or it may have a background of ill-will and conflict darkening the future and creating barriers to healthy co-operation.

I believe it is an appreciation of all this that has brought about a welcome change in the outlook of many people here. They realise that in a dynamic situation mere passivity and indifference do not pay, while an active policy might well be advantageous.

England and India have an unfortunate background of hostility and conflict. It is not easy for an Indian to forget this, and yet in these pregnant days of world conflicts and Fascist aggression and an ever-present possibility of terrible war, if we continue to think and function in the narrow terms of the past, we do so at our peril. We must rise

above them and take the larger view.

I trust that it may be possible in the future for India and England to co-operate together as equals for the common good. But that co-operation is impossible under the shadow of Empire. That Empire will have to be liquidated and India will have to gain her independence before real co-operation is possible.

As an Indian nationalist I have nothing to say to England, for we can only think of her in terms of imperialism. I can only work for building up and increasing our own strength and relying on it to gain our objective.

But,. as one who ardently desires a world order based on peace and freedom, I have much to say to England and to her people, for I see her present Government pursuing a policy disastrous alike for both peace and freedom.

That policy widens the gap between England and India, for we are entirely opposed to it and consider it one of the major evils of the present-day world. Can there be co-operation between us on this basis?

As a Socialist, I have even more to say to my comrades here. British Labour in the past has wobbled dangerously on imperial issues and more particularly on India. Its record is bad. But in

these times of peril, none of us dare wobble or equivocate. And so it is time that British Labour acted up to the principles it has enunciated, and, as it happens, even expediency demands such action.

Labour, which is anti-Fascist, must also equally be anti-Imperialist. It must stand for the ending of Empire. It must clearly declare for the independence of India and for the right of the people there to frame their own constitution through a Constituent Assembly, and it must be prepared to do everything in its power to bring this about.

We are not concerned over much with the Federation, for we want the whole of the Government of India Act to go and to be replaced by a constitution of our own making.

The time has passed for minor remedies and the world rushes to catastrophe. We may yet avert this if the progressive forces of the world work together. India can play her part in this company, but only a free India can do so. British Labour working to this end will lay the foundations of future friendship and co-operation between the peoples of England and India.

It is gratifying to note that the leaders of British Labour are thinking on these lines. It is

still more pleasing to find the rank and file of the Labour movement responding enthusiastically to this call of freedom.

The world marches rapidly to-day and no one knows what to-morrow will bring. India also is changing and going ahead, and all our planning may be out of date soon. But a basis of goodwill between the progressive forces in India and England will lay the foundations for future co-operation for our mutual good and to the advantage of world peace and freedom.

October 28, 1938.

THE WAR CRISIS, 1939

THE WOOING OF RUSSIA

Twenty years ago the young Soviet Republic was assailed on all sides by powerful nations—England, the United States, France, Japan. Within her own territories counter-revolution, aided from abroad, raised its ugly head. Without an army, without money, without technical resources or industry, and faced by utter disorganisation following war and defeat and revolution, she hung on the brink of collapse and her enemies counted the hours when they would finally triumph over her. Even her friends thought it an impossible venture, doomed to disappear. But the indomitable will and genius of a great man embodying a new life and a new hope, triumphed over these amazing odds, and Soviet Russia lived.

Yet they looked upon her with contempt and disdain, an untouchable among nations, of the pariah breed that had dared to challenge her betters. They would not recognise her or deal with her, and insulted her and put every difficulty in her way. She still lived on, ignoring these gibes and intent on creating that new life which had inspired her to

this great endeavour. Trial and misfortune came her way and often she erred and suffered for error. But still she went on with faith and energy building the world of her dreams.

Perhaps the dreams did not quite come true, the reality was somewhat different from the picture in the mind. Yet a new world did come into existence, a brave new world with life and hope and security and opportunity for the millions that inhabited her broad territories. Industry spread with lightning speed, new cities sprang up, agriculture changed its aspect and collective farms replaced the outworn methods of yesterday, literacy became wide-spread, education and culture grew, the sciences were wooed and their planned methods applied to a nation's regeneration.

The world was interested. What was this strange phenomenon of rapid progress and lack of unemployment, when the rest of the world was crushed and throttled by the great depression and unemployment grew everywhere? The statesmen and the chancellories did not approve of this abnormal behaviour. It was a bad example for their own people. They set about intriguing to get the Soviet into trouble; they irritated her by offensive behaviour; they tried to entangle her into war. But she ignored these insults and

refused to be drawn into war. Full of her gigantic programme of national reconstruction, she pursued the policy of peace in foreign affairs, deliberately and consistently.

Meanwhile she built her army and air-force, and, as these grew, respect for her also grew even among those who disliked her. But with respect there grew also fear and so they still intrigued and tried to isolate her and to encourage the new fascist Powers against her. The upholders of democracy in Europe made love to the Nazis and the Fascists, put up with their aggressions, brutalities and vulgar insolence, betrayed those who had relied upon them, were treacherous to their friends and allies, all in the hope of crushing the Soviet and turning Nazi aggression against her. They ignored her at Munich although she was an ally of France as well as of the very country they had met to dismember. To the last the Soviet was faithful to her allies and commitments.

Eight months have passed since Munich and the policy of 'appeasement' has had full play. And now the gods laugh. There is no longer any ignoring of Soviet Russia. She has suitors galore, each one trying to win her favour. Even Hitler, the great enemy of Communism, is respectful to her and seeks accommodation. France and England

pursue her and in soft words try to hide their previous dislike of her. Suddenly Soviet Russia has gained the whip hand in international affairs and it is her decision that will make a vital difference.

For Soviet Russia today is the most powerful country in the Eurasian continent. She is powerful not only because of great army and vast air force but because of her enormous resources and the strength of the socialist structure she has built up. Hitler's Germany, with all her armed might, has feet of clay and no sustaining strength for war or peace. She is old already and requires frequent tonics to keep her going. These tonics have come to her through each fresh aggression and through the goodwill of England and France. Her resources are limited, her money power strained to the utmost. France, with her fine army, counts but she has already taken a back seat among the Powers. England, with her great empire, where is she today? She has great resources but great weaknesses also; the days of her pride and domination are past.

Where would England be today or France or the other countries of western and northern and south-eastern Europe, were it not for Soviet Russia? It is a strange thought that the only effective bulwark against Nazi aggression in Europe is the Soviet. Without Soviet help most of the

other countries might even collapse without a struggle. Without that help England's guarantee to Poland or Rumania means little.

There are only two Powers in the world today which count in the ultimate analysis—the United States of America and the Soviet Union. The United States are almost unapproachable and their resources are enormous. The Soviet Union is not so favourably situated geographically but is yet almost unbeatable. All other Powers are of the second rank compared to these two and have to rely on alliances for their protection. And as time passes the disparity will increase.

And so Soviet Russia, with all her communism, is wooed by those who hated her, and the gods laugh.

May 30, 1939.

ENGLAND'S DILEMMA

British foreign policy was traditionally based on the protection of the empire and empire routes, on the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe which gave England a dominating voice, and on the consolidation of British financial supremacy which had lasted for a hundred years prior to the Great War. England's industrial domination began to be challenged by the United States and Germany in the second half of the nineteenth century. Conflicts of imperialisms grew which led to the War of 1914. That war left England politically in a very advantageous position but her financial dominance was challenged by the United States. After a hard conflict with America, she managed to retain that financial position in the world, although she was a debtor nation and the United States were far richer and were the sole creditor nation among the great Powers. But the price England paid for this seeming victory was a heavy one and unemployment grew and her industries languished. There came the great slump.

It was curious that while England had been

the leader in introducing political democracy, she was backward in the social sphere. Even today England is far more conservative in social matters than most countries in Europe. The strain of social conflict was avoided or lessened because of her prosperity and the wealth that poured in from the exploitation of her empire. To some small extent her working class became sharers in this new wealth and were imperialist in outlook. England's real proletariat was in India and in the British colonies.

The rise of Soviet Russia and the growth of communist and socialist ideas disturbed the ruling classes of Britain and they tried to put an end to the Soviet soon after the Great War. They failed in this but their attitude of hostility continued. Russia was looked upon as both a social and political danger and so the traditional policy of the Foreign Office fitted in with this opposition to her. Japanese aggression in Manchuria led inevitably, unless checked, to the undermining of the whole structure of the League of Nations. And yet it was not only tolerated but encouraged by England. Sir John Simon, who was Secretary for Foreign Affairs then, went out of his way to support Japan, and thus sabotage the League. The whole basis of British policy was then and continued to be in

opposition to the Soviet Union and the desire to weaken it both in Europe and the Far East. The Foreign Office or the British ruling classes were quite clear in their own minds and had no doubts. Some elements in the country might shout and protest but they did not influence policy; only occasionally they influenced the manner of enunciating that basic policy.

The coming of Hitler brought a confusing factor into the situation. The confusion arose in two ways; this threatened to upset the balance of power in Europe, and the British public generally was hostile to Hitler and his methods. But the Foreign Office continued to pursue its old policy. The threat from Hitler was a remote one while the social and political threat from the Soviet was deemed to be more immediate and dangerous. As for public opinion it was soothed by brave words occasionally while the old policy continued. This policy now aimed at utilising Hitler against the Soviet. And so Hitler was encouraged in every way and in fact Nazi Germany grew in power under the direct protection of the British Government. This encouragement went so far as to alienate and frighten France. The Anglo-German Naval Treaty, made in direct defiance of the Treaty of Versailles and of the League, and without

even the knowledge of the French Government, agitated France, so much that she rushed into the arms of Mussolini and gave guarantees not to interfere if Abyssinia were invaded. Mussolini knew that if France did not interfere, neither would England. He had a free field now. Thus the Abyssinian invasion was the direct result of British policy.

It was not wholly liked by Britain for certain British imperial interests were involved—the upper waters of the Nile, the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean. A conflict thus arose between these British imperial interests and the policy that the Foreign Office was pursuing. The latter prevailed as the British Government was totally averse to bringing about the downfall of the fascist regime in Italy. Their policy aimed at protecting Fascism and Nazism and combating Communism through them. The social danger was considered greater than the political. But British public opinion was strongly opposed to Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia and something had to be done to soothe it. The League agreed to some relatively harmless sanctions and Sir Samuel Hoare, then Foreign Secretary, delivered a speech expounding the principles of the League and swearing by collective security—a speech that was duly applauded. England felt

very virtuous and pleased with herself, as she always does when her imperial interests are made to fit in with high morality. That same Sir Samuel very soon after entirely forgot his Geneva Speech and entered into a secret pact about Abyssinia with Monsieur Laval. This leaked out and came as a shock to the British public which had been given no time to adjust itself to the *volte face*. Sir Samuel had to go and Mr. Eden appeared on the scene.

But there was no great change in policy, and despite the agitation of the public in England, the Foreign Office calmly continued on its predetermined course. President Roosevelt's suggestion to introduce oil sanctions, which would have crippled Italy, was ignored and, instead, the British-owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company worked night and day to provide oil to Italy. The rape of Abyssinia was completed.

Meanwhile Hitler took advantage of the situation to advance and consolidated his position. France grew increasingly alarmed but England smiled, though sometimes protesting, at each step of Nazi Germany.

The revolt in Spain followed, carefully engineered by Italy and Germany and with their help. This was the acid test. Here was a democratically elected government being attacked by a military

clique at home aided by mercenaries and foreign Powers. What would have Mr. Chamberlain done, as Mr. Lloyd George has recently asked, if Russia had fomented revolution in Spain? Would he have smiled at it and signed a pact with Stalin?

There was another difficulty. Britain's imperial interests were directly concerned here and there was danger to the Empire if Spain passed into hostile hands. The balance of power in Europe would be completely upset, the Nazi-Fascist bloc would gain a dominating position, France would be encircled, the Mediterranean would be controlled by enemy Powers, Gibralter could not hold out, and the great trade routes would be seriously threatened. Still the Foreign Office pursued its old policy for its aversion to the growth of democracy and socialism was greater even than its love of Empire. Non-intervention, which meant helping Italian and German intervention and throttling the Spanish Republic, was proclaimed.

British ships were sunk in the Mediterranean and there was an outcry in England. The Foreign Office was troubled at last and began to think that this immediate danger was perhaps greater than the social danger. For a brief while it showed firmness and at Nyon Mr. Eden announced that England would not tolerate this and would take

swift action if this piracy continued. For the first time England was showing her teeth to the Nazi and Fascist Powers and there was an immediate improvement in the situation.

Mr. Eden and the Foreign Office had come to the conclusion that this change was necessary and for a brief while they had their way. But not for long for Mr. Neville Chamberlain thought otherwise. He was completely wedded to the wooing of Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini, and he hated this new democratic Spain and even more so the Soviet Union. So Eden went and gave place to Lord Halifax. The inner cabinet consisting of the Prime Minister, Lord Halifax, Sir John Simon and Sir Samuel Hoare had no dissenting voice to trouble them. They could follow the policy of 'appeasement' unchecked whatever the consequences to England and her Empire. The dilemma did not trouble them for the most urgent task was not to irritate Hitler or Mussolini.

As Signor Mussolini was bent on destroying the Spanish Republic, the sooner this was done the better. The British Government hurried to conclude a pact with Signor Mussolini and compelled France to close her Spanish frontier. They waited impatiently for the Spanish Republic to expire but, to their great irritation, it refused to die. In-

deed it seemed to gather new strength. Mr. Chamberlain looked rather ridiculous with his Anglo-Italian Pact and it became a point of honour with him to justify himself by doing everything to end the Republic. If British ships were torpedoed or bombed he justified this as the natural punishment for those who took the risk of taking food to the Republic. The world was divided in sympathy over Spain. Fierce loyalties were aroused. There was no doubt on which side Mr. Chamberlain's loyalty lay.

The policy of appeasement continued. The centre of trouble shifted to Central Europe. Hitler threatened Austria. Mr. Chamberlain publicly stated that he would not intervene in Austria. It was an invitation to Hitler and he promptly took advantage of it and marched in.

Czecho-Slovakia was threatened. The Foreign Office, perhaps forgetting Mr. Chamberlain, ordered the withdrawal of the British Ambassador from Berlin if Germany invaded Czechoslovakia. The Czechs mobilised overnight and the crisis of March 1938 passed. Herr Hitler was angry at this check to his plans. And so apparently were Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax. The Foreign Office had taken the bit into its own teeth and spoilt the even tenor of appeasement. This could not be

tolerated and so Sir Robert Vansittart, the permanent head of the Foreign Office, was removed and promoted to some inconspicuous position, and his place was taken by Sir Arnold Wilson.

Sir Arnold was the right man to push appeasement. He was pro-Nazi and fiercely anti-Soviet. He was closely associated with the important and influential group which functioned on behalf of Nazi Germany in England. There was the Cliveden set, and the owner and the editor of the *Times,* and the pro-Franco enthusiasts. Small in numbers, they dominated the Government and Mr. Neville Chamberlain was their especial pet. The fifth Column was now in full control of England's foreign policy.

Step by step this policy developed in Central Europe and in Spain. Lord Runciman was sent to break the back of the Czechs and encourage the Nazis. Munich came and the triumph of appeasement was complete. Mr. Chamberlain was the hero who had brought peace. There was deep tragedy in a million homes in Czechoslovakia and the concentration camps were full. A brave people had been betrayed by those they had looked upon as their friends. There was contempt for England and France all over the world. But what did this matter if the old game, to satisfy Hitler

in the West and drive him to attack the Soviet, was progressing satisfactorily. The Soviet had been ignored and isolated. England was the best ally of Hitler and, if all went well, a measure of Fascism, of course under democratic garb, might be introduced in England also.

But all did not go well, although Spain, Republican Spain, that had shouldered the burden of the world's fight for freedom, lay stabbed to death by England and France. Mr. Chamberlain and his Government had paid a heavy price and taken many risks and the time had come when the reward for this persistence in appeasement should come to them—the reward of a Germany satiated in the West turning East and coming to grips with the Soviet. But the reward receded into the distance. There were still succulent morsels in the east and south-east of Europe which Hitler might pick up, but what then? Suddenly it became obvious that Germany had no intention of coming into conflict with the Soviet Union. She had too much respect for the Soviet's military machine and no desire to get entangled in the vast areas of the Soviet country. It was easier to take the succulent morsels and then lock the back door in the east and turn west.

This was an alarming prospect. The whole

edifice of appeasement was tottering. The price had been paid not only in the blood and suffering of millions, in the sacrifice of democracy, in the loss of respect and prestige, but also in the handing over of vital strategic points to the potential enemies. And nothing had been received in exchange. Well might the men in power in England and France think sorrowfully of the lost legions of Czecho-slovakia, of the great Skoda works which might have worked for them and now would produce munitions for the enemy. Well might they regret bitterly what they had done in Spain.

The final end of the Czech State, the absorption of Memel into Germany, the invasion of Albania, followed each other rapidly. There was mounting alarm in England and even the Tories grumbled and threatened to revolt against the policy of appeasement. There was much talk of democracy in danger, that democracy which had been twice killed by these very people in Czechoslovakia and in Spain. It was not love of democracy or freedom that moved the Tories but fear of losing their empire and perhaps their own country's freedom. The old dilemma faced them with added force now: shall we safeguard our empire by stopping and destroying the Fascists, or should we continue to safeguard our social system by avoiding war

and following the policy of appeasement through further concessions and further vacillations? These concessions had so far been at other peoples' cost but the time had come when payment might have to be made out of one's own living flesh. Munich and what followed had terribly weakened England and France; any further appeasement might enfeeble them so much as to make resistance difficult. Russia, the one Power that might save them, was sullen and angry and in no mood to fall into any trap.

The immediate danger was too great to be ignored and the other danger to the social system took a second place. There was a great outcry in England that appeasement must be given up and a firm line adopted against Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in cooperation with Soviet Russia. Mr. Neville Chamberlain, clever politician that he is, bowed to the blast and declared a change in policy. There were rejoicings everywhere and a nightmare seemed to have ended.

But had Mr. Chamberlain changed his policy? He had given guarantees to Poland and Rumania, guarantees which he could not effectively honour without Soviet aid. The choice was to approach the Soviet and come to an agreement with it, or when the hour came to forget the guarantee and

betray again.

Had Mr. Chamberlain changed? This was unlikely. He is a stubborn man with firm ideas about foreign policy and, despite everything that had happened in Central Europe and Spain, he had stuck to that policy. His governing passion was dislike of Russia and all that the Soviet stands for. Was he going to get rid of his complexes and his prejudices and admit the failure of his policy.. This was highly unlikely, and his past record of dishonoured assurances and double crossing had left little faith in his political honesty. Even if he declared a change in policy, how many would believe him?

But his acts spoke more loudly than his words and made it clear that he stuck as of old to appeasement. In spite of Albania he continued with the Anglo-Italian Treaty. In spite of the tragedy and horror of Spain and her starving refugees, his representative graced Franco's victory parade in Madrid. Sir Neville Henderson, that pro-Nazi champion of appeasement, was sent back to his ambassador's post in Berlin—there to be insulted by Von Ribbentrop, who was too busy to see him. The *Times* of London, in its own mischievous way, suggested that Danzig was not worth fighting for and so, as in the case of Sudetanland last year,

invited Germany to take possession of it. It is notorious that the *Times* represents in such matters Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax. In the House of Commons Mr. Chamberlain refuses to give an assurance that he will not recognise the conquest of Bohemia and Moravia. There are inspired hints in the press that another Munich is coming. The Fifth Column is hard at work again and appeasement flourishes.

Meanwhile, taking advantage of the feeling of alarm, Mr. Chamberlain has introduced conscription. What is the true meaning of this? A British general declared recently that conscription was very useful to suppress opposition elements in England. Mr. Chamberlain is following the road to internal fascism in Britain under cover of war preparations, and he is likely to succeed. The press will be censored and kept strictly in control and public life will be restricted. The pro-Fascist elements in England would even court defeat in war rather than ally themselves to the Soviet Union and the other progressive forces. That is the policy Mr. Chamberlain is bent on carrying on, and is in fact pursuing.

But there are powerful elements in England, including some leaders of the Tory party, which disagree with this policy and want an alliance with

the Soviet to combat Nazi Germany. Mr. Chamberlain has to soothe them and carries on negotiations with the Soviet for this purpose. His proposals to Russia were cleverly designed to make her pull out his chestnuts out of the fire. Russia refused and proposed a real treaty against all aggression. If Mr. Chamberlain was really anxious to stop aggression he should have no difficulty in accepting such a treaty. But he has no such anxiety. His sole motive force seems to be to make the world safe for Fascism and to line up England with the fascist countries.

It may be that the pressure of events and his own people may compel him to come to terms with the Soviet. Even so who is to trust him? He will not forsake his dearly-loved policy of appeasement and he will betray his friends and allies as he has done before. Even if war breaks out and England is involved in it under Mr. Chamberlain's leadership, there is no certainty that appeasement will end. Munich may come during that war. Some able observers are of opinion that it is highly likely that after a few weeks of carnage, when the nerves of the people are thoroughly shaken up, Mr. Chamberlain may be offered and might accept an advantageous separate peace, ensuring Fascism at home and abroad. The war would help in estab-

lishing the apparatus for internal fascism.

In France today there is a military dictatorship and the Chamber of Deputies does not count for much. Certain democratic liberties are allowed to continue but they are at the mercy of the authorities. France that denied arms and even food to the Spanish Republic is now pouring in arms to Franco. All the arms that the Republican troops left in France are being given to Franco. The Spanish gold that was in Paris and was not given to the Republic is also being handed over to Franco, and Franco belongs to the Berlin-Rome Axis. Is this an abandonment of appeasement? Is this the way to build up a democratic peace front.

Let us be clear about it. The same old policy of appeasement continues and the same old betrayals will follow. For the fear of social change is greater than any other fear in the minds of those who govern England and France. So long as Mr. Chamberlain is in control, there will be no essential change, and even if events force his hands, he will hanker after his old way and return to it whenever he can.

But in the minds even of the governing classes of England there is this dilemma; shall we safeguard our empire by stopping fascist aggression and destroying Fascism, or safeguard our social system by

avoiding war at all cost and giving further concessions to Nazi Germany and fascist Italy? Mr Chamberlain has no doubt about his answer. He sticks to the social system and to Fascism.

We in India have no such dilemma for we want the end of that empire as well as of that social system. And so whether war comes now or is delayed, we cannot take part in it, except as a free country making a free choice in favour of real democracy and peace. There is or can be neither democracy nor peace under Mr. Chamberlain's lead or under British imperialist control. That is the way of fascism and betrayal of democracy. That way can only lead to the further exploitation and humiliation of India.

It is an irony of fate that Mr. Neville Chamberlain should pose as the leader of British democracy when he believes in Fascism and has done perhaps more than any other person to enfeeble democracy; that Monsieur Daladier should be the dictator of France; and that Lord Halifax and the pro-Nazi Monsieur Bonnet should be foreign ministers of England and France. Is it from these people that democracy will seek inspiration or hope for deliverance? How petty they all look before a great democratic figure like Roosevelt.

But we should not be misled by these false

prophets of democracy. Democracy for us means freedom for our people. That is our acid test.

May 31, 1939.

INDIA AND THE WAR

Events march on, over-topping each other, pushed onward by some implacable urge. Elemental forces sweep the world, disdaining the scheming of those who, from their seats of authority, had sought to stem them. Men and women become playthings of destiny and are drawn into the seething whirlpool of war. Whither do we all go, what will be the outcome of this conflict where peoples and nations fight desperately for survival, none can tell. Yet we can say that the world we have known is dissolving before our eyes—to give place to what?

In this tragic world drama of epic significance what part will India play? In words of power and dignity the Working Committee have indicated the road we have to travel. Though the final decision has not been made, the fundamental principles governing this decision have been laid down. The basic decision has been made already and the application of this to existing circumstances has yet to be made. That application depends now on how far those basic principles are accepted and applied

in the present by the British Government. Briefly put, India can no longer consent to be treated as a part of an empire. She will not permit herself to be used as a subject nation ordered about by others. Whether in peace or war she must function as a free nation.

Nothing is so astonishing in recent history as the complete bankruptcy of the British Government prior to the war. Truly it may be said that by their own policy they have brought all their troubles upon themselves and the world. Manchuria, Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia, Spain, and the insulting treatment offered to Soviet Russia last year, have step by step brought the catastrophe nearer, and now we have all plunged into the abyss. England faces this crisis with courage and determination, but she has to carry the heavy burden of her past policy, and, in the light of that policy, her present declarations in favour of democracy and freedom carry little weight. Even now the chance is offered her to throw the burden and rid herself of her imperialist tradition, and thus unhampered march with equal partners to the goal of freedom for all. There is no other way. Is she wise enough or great enough to follow this path willingly and with faith in it?

So far she has shown singular lack of wisdom

and has taken various steps in relation to India which have been completely at variance with the declared will of the Indian people. Does she think that a proud people, conscious of their strength, can accept such treatment? India can no longer be dragged or pushed or compelled to follow the dictates of external authority. The time has come to put an end to the idea of empire and to seek the friendship and cooperation of free nations. India must be accepted and treated as a free country on terms of equality. Any other course leads to conflict and misfortune for all concerned.

For our own people, as for others, this is a time of trial and testing. If we fail in this test, we are left behind and others march ahead. We cannot and must not think in terms of this party or that, of this community or religious group or another, of Right or Left consolidations. The hour calls for national consolidation in the great cause of Indian and world freedom. To continue our petty bickerings and lay stress on differences, to suspect evil motives in one another, to seek advantage for a group or a party, is to demonstrate our pettiness when great issues are at stake. That way lies disservice to India and her people.

The Working Committee have given the lead; India has spoken and her voice has found an echo

in our hearts. Let us all stand by it and not raise jarring notes in this hour of destiny. Every Congressman must weigh his words and measure his action so that he says or does nothing to weaken the national resolve or take away from the dignity of the Congress. We hold together, we speak together and we shall act together for the sake of India whose love has inspired us so long and whose service has been our high privilege. The future beckons to us. Let us march in step to the goal of freedom.

September 20, 1939.

WAR AIMS AND PEACE AIMS

I

The statement issued by the Working Committee of the Congress has drawn public attention to certain aspects of the war situation which were sadly ignored. There was a tendency on the one hand to talk in terms of India rushing into the war without thought or aim or purpose, and on the other hand of vague resistance to war. Both these attitudes were negative attitudes which did not take into consideration the realities of the present situation and the numerous developments that have taken place in the world and in India. Neither attitude was that of constructive statesmanship. The Working Committee have done a great service by its constructive lead to the nation. That service is not confined to India only; it extends to all those who think in terms of freedom and democracy and a new order, and there are vast numbers of such people in the world today. In effect, therefore, the Working Committee have given a lead to the progressive forces all over the world. We do not know how far this voice of India will go in

these days of war and difficulty in communication, or how many outside India will hear it. But we are sure that those whom it reaches will welcome it and support a clear enunciation of war and peace aims.

The Committee's statement necessarily dealt with certain broad principles. These principles will however have to be translated into concrete terms, and it seems to us desirable that public consideration should be given to this matter. In this grave crisis none of us can afford to take refuge in negation or in mere slogans howsoever pleasing they may sound. The slogans, if they have any relation to fact, must be capable of application in terms of the present. To that application we must address ourselves. It may be that our efforts fail and that application cannot take place today, and we are led by the inheritance of the past and the implacable urges of the present to a conflict with all its unfortunate implications. That would be misfortune for India and the world, especially at this moment when bold statesmanship is demanded to rid the world of oppression and tyranny and the exploitation of human beings. The path is difficult, yet there is a path, though the obstructions are many and not all of our making; there is a door through which we may pass to the garden

of the future, but that door is guarded by folly and ancient privileges and vested interest.

Before we consider war aims and peace aims, let us define our approach to the problem. In India today the war is still a far-away affair, exciting enough, but something apart from us, affecting us little. This is not so in Europe and elsewhere, for there it is constant sorrow and misery, and imminent danger and death and destruction, and a tension that breaks the heart, for innumerable multitudes. There is no home in Europe which is free from this gnawing fear and this sinking of the heart, for the world they have known has come to an end, and horror has descended upon them, horror almost without end for themselves, for their dear ones, for much they have valued in life. Brave men and women, pawns in the hands of elemental forces which they cannot control, face the issue with courage, but the only hope that illumines their minds for a while is the hope of a better future for the world, so that their sacrifice may not have been in vain.

Let us think of these peoples in various countries, whether that country is Poland or France or England or Russia or Germany, with respect and full sympathy. Let us not presume to make fun of their suffering or say anything unthinkingly

which hurts those who have to carry this heavy burden. We have had an old quarrel with England, though not with the people of England. That quarrel will end with our freedom when only we can make friends on equal terms with England. But for the English people, in their present misfortune, as for other peoples, we have only sympathy and good-will. We also know that whatever their imperialist Government may have done or may do in the future, there is a large fund of sympathy for freedom and democracy today among the English people. It is for these ideals that they fight. These ideals are ours also, though we fear that governments may belie their words and their professions. Imperialism holds sway still in many parts of the world, and notably in India. And yet 1939 is not 1914. This quarter of a century has brought mighty changes in the world and in India, changes not so much in the outer structure, but in minds of people and in their desire to change this outer structure and put an end to an order based on violence and conflict.

In India we are very different from what we were in 1914. We have gained strength and political consciousness and a capacity for united action. In spite of our manifold difficulties and problems, we are no weak nation today. Our voice counts

to some extent even in international affairs. If we had been free we might have even succeeded in preventing this war. Sometimes the Irish analogy is placed before us. While we may learn much from Ireland and her struggle for freedom, we must remember that we are placed differently. Ireland is a small country which is geographically and economically tied to Britain. Even an independent Ireland cannot make much difference to world affairs. Not so India. A free India, with her vast resources, can be of great service to the world and to humanity. India will always make a difference to the world; fate has marked us for big things. When we fall, we fall low; when we rise, inevitably we play our part in the world drama.

This war is, as the Working Committee have said, the inevitable outcome of all manner of contradictions and conflicts in the present political and economic structure. But the immediate cause of the war is the growth and aggression of Fascism and Naziism. Ever since the birth of Nazi Germany the Congress, with true insight, has condemned Fascism and seen in it the intensification of the principles of Imperialism. A series of resolutions testify to this judgment of the Congress. It is clear, therefore, that we must oppose Fascism and a victory over Fascism will be our victory

also. But to us that victory has meaning only in the larger context of imperialism. We cannot score a victory over Fascism by surrendering our freedom and the struggle to achieve it.

For us to bargain in the spirit of the market place would ill serve our cause or suit India's dignity at a time of world peril. Our freedom is too precious to be bargained for, but it is too precious also to be ignored or put aside because the world has gone awry. That freedom itself is the very basis and foundation of the world freedom that is proclaimed. If we participate in a joint effort for freedom, that effort must be really joint, based on consent as between free equals. Otherwise it has no meaning, no value. Even from the point of view of success in the war, that free joint participation is of importance. From the wider point of view of the objects which the war is supposed to achieve, our freedom is essential.

This, we hold, is the background of any consideration of the problem of war and peace aims.

September 21, 1939.

II

What will be the end of the war, how long will it last? What will Soviet Russia do? Will Herr Hitler seek peace after crushing Poland? We claim to have no answer to these and many other questions, and those who seek to answer them have perhaps little justification for doing so. We are, however, convinced that this war, if it does not annihilate modern civilisation, will revolutionise the present political and economic order. We cannot conceive of empires and imperialism continuing in the old way after the war.

Soviet Russia is at present a mystifying factor in the world situation. It is obvious that whatever Russia does will have important and far-reaching results. But as we do not know what she is going to do, we have to leave her out of our present calculations. The Russo-German Pact came as a shock and a surprise to many. There was nothing surprising in it, except the manner of doing it and the moment chosen for it. At any other time, it would have naturally fitted in with Soviet foreign policy. But there can be little doubt that at that particular moment, it brought dismay to many friends to Russia. There seemed to be too much over-reaching, cynicism and opportunism about

it. That criticism applied to Hitler also, who over-night had dropped his fierce anti-communism and apparently made friends with the Soviet. A cynic said that Russia has joined the Anti-Commintern Pact; another that Hitler was turning Communist as well as a patron of the Jews. All this seems to us fantastic nonsense, for there can be, and there is going to be, no real alliance between Hitler and Stalin. But both are willing enough to play at the game of power politics. Russia has suffered insult enough at the hands of England to resent it bitterly.

The Soviet's march into eastern Poland was another shock. But it is yet difficult to say whether this was to counter the German army or to weaken the Poles or merely to take advantage of a particular situation from the nationalist point of view. From the meagre information that we possess it seems, however, that Russia's advance into Poland has certainly come in the way of German designs. It has prevented German occupation of Eastern Poland and cried a halt to the German Army. More important still is the occupation of the entire Polish-Rumanian frontier by the Soviet Army. This has made it certain that Germany cannot take possession of the Rumanian oil-fields which she coveted and probably that she cannot draw

upon the vast wheat supplies of Rumania. The Balkans are saved from German aggression and Turkey breathes with relief. All this may mean little today but in the future, as the war progresses, it will have a vital significance. It may be thus that Soviet Russia has rendered a great service to the cause of the Western Allies and Bernard Shaw's dictum that Stalin has made a cat's-paw of Hitler has some truth in it.

Herr Hitler has ominously hinted in his Danzig speech that he has some terrible secret weapon which he will not hesitate to use, howsoever inhuman it might be, if circumstances compel him to do so. What this novel terror is, a death-ray or some such thing, no one knows. It might well be an idle boast. There are terrors enough for humanity in the armoury of every great Power today, and they will be added to, as the war proceeds, and all the powers of science are harnessed to quench its insatiable thirst for blood. We cannot say which side will have the advantage in this gruesome competition.

The aeroplane has so far not been the vital factor which some people expected it to be, though it is murderous and destructive enough. Perhaps we have not yet seen full use made of it. But all the experience in Spain and China, as well as the

growth of the means of defence from air attack, indicate that the air arm will not be the deciding factor.

There is a chance, it is said, that Hitler may try for peace after his Polish campaign is over, or Signor Mussolini might act in his behalf in this respect. But there will be no peace then, for peace means the triumph of Hitler and the submission of England and France to his might. There may still be some advocates of "appeasement" in England or France but the temper of their people will not permit it. There is also a chance, a more probable one, of internal trouble in Germany which might shorten the war. But on that too it is unsafe to rely, at any rate in the early stages of the war. The war is thus likely to be a long one running into two or three years.

There are too many uncertainties in war for prophecy to be made. Yet the human mind must look ahead and try to peep through the veil of the future. That future seems to indicate that the area of war will spread and more and more nations will be dragged in. It will in effect become a world war where neutrals hardly count, and it will go on year after year, destroying and killing and reducing the world to waste and ruin, till the common-sense of war-worn humanity rebels

against it and puts an end to it.

In this long war the advantages are all on the side of the Western Allies. Their economic and financial resources are far greater than those of Germany; and they will have a great part of the world to draw upon. In spite of German submarine activity or attack from the air, the sea-routes will be more or less controlled by them. America and Asia and Africa will supply them with many of their needs, while Germany's sources of supply are strictly limited. We ignore for the present the part that Soviet Russia might play. This can be of tremendous importance, both in the military and an economic sense, but we think it highly unlikely that Russia will aid Nazi Germany.

If other countries join the war, the only possible allies for Germany are Italy and Japan. Japan will be immobolised to some extent by Soviet Russia and her Chinese campaign has sobered her. Italy will make a difference in the Mediterranean, but not a vital one. She might even be more helpful to Germany as a neutral country supplying food and other necessities and thus breaking the blockade. In any event war against England and France will be very unpopular in Italy. Even Signor Mussolini is said to have moderated in his love for Herr

Hitler. Still it is possible for Italy to join Germany.

On the side of the Western Allies, there would be a tremendous acquisition of strength if the United States of America joined them. There is at present a marked isolationist tendency in the United States, but far stronger than that is the anti-Hitler and anti-Nazi feeling. On no account will America tolerate a victory for Hitler. It is extremely likely therefore that in the later stages of the war the United States will join England and France. Even before they do that, they will help them in supplying their war needs, and as in the last war, this very help will become an inducement to join.

Whatever the more fundamental reasons for the war, the conflicts between rival imperialisms, the final cause was Nazi aggression. The last eighteen months of continuing Nazi aggression in Central Europe have embittered vast numbers of people all over the world against Nazi Germany, which has become in their eyes the embodiment of evil in the international sphere. This is a powerful psychological factor in favour of the Western Allies. In England and France it has resulted in absolute national unity in the prosecution of the war to the bitter end. It is unlikely that there is

such unity in Germany where millions of people are the enemies of the Nazi regime. Recent reports of internal trouble in Germany proper may be exaggerated, but such trouble is always likely, more especially if the war drags on and adds to the burdens and miseries of the people. It is certain that there will be continual trouble in Bohemia and Moravia and probably Slovakia. The people of Czechoslovakia, easily subdued because of their friends' betrayal, will take their revenge now.

All this indicates that in a long war, and the war is likely to be a long one, the scales will be heavily balanced in favour of the Western Allies. But that advantage will be theirs only if their war and peace aims are for real freedom and democracy and self-determination, so that the peoples of the world may know and believe that the objective is worth the terrible price they pay. It is not for the continuation of imperialism that they will fight and make sacrifice. And it is the peoples of the world who will have the final say, not the governments that have misled them for so long. If governments do not fall in with their wishes, they will have to go and to give place to others.

September 21, 1939.

III

What are the professed war aims of the Western Allies? We are told that they fight for democracy and freedom, for the ending of the Nazi regime and of Hitlerism, for the liberation of Poland. Mr. Chamberlain has added that Czechoslovakia must also be freed. We agree. But all this is not enough, and hence the importance of the invitation extended by the Working Committee to the British Government to state fully and unequivocally what their war and peace aims are.

Let us carry the argument further. If Hitlerism is to go, it necessarily follows that there should be no truce or pacts with any fascist power, even other than Germany. It means that Japanese and Italian aggression should not be recognised, and our policy should be directed to assist China, in so far as we can, in her struggle for freedom. It means further that the policy applied to Fascism should be extended to Imperialism and both should be ended. In any event and even apart from international developments, we must have a free and independent India. But for the present we consider Indian freedom in its world context of Imperialism. To condemn Fascism and seek to defend or maintain Imperialism is illogical and absurd. A world

which has had enough of Fascism cannot tolerate Imperialism. It is thus an inevitable consequence of a struggle against Fascism that Imperialism should also be ended, or else the whole purpose of that struggle is vitiated and it becomes a contest for power between rival imperialisms.

A statement of war aims should thus include: the liberation of countries taken by Hitler, the ending of the Nazi regime, no truce or pacts with fascist Powers, and the extension of democracy and freedom by the winding up of the imperialist structure and the application of the principle of self-determination. There should of course be no secret treaties, no conquests, no indemnities or reparations, no bargains over colonial areas. In the colonies also the principle of self-determination should be applied, and steps should be taken to democratise them. All discrimination based on race must go. We can admit no peace settlement over the bodies of colonial peoples.

It is in no spirit of bargaining that we make these suggestions, nor is there the slightest desire to take advantage of another's difficulty. We sympathise with that difficulty, but that sympathy cannot make us forget our own difficulties and disabilities. If we desire the freedom of Poland or Czechoslovakia, much more do we desire the

freedom of China, and it is not just narrow self-interest that induces us to give first place to the freedom of India. Freedom can have no meaning for us if we ourselves do not possess it, and it would be a hollow mockery if we shouted for the freedom of a distant land and submitted to subjection ourselves. But even looking at it from the point of view of the war, such freedom is essential, in order to make this a popular war which moves the people to courage and sacrifice for a cause which they consider theirs. As this war goes on from month to month and year to year, and weariness comes over the peoples of all countries, it is this urge to defend one's own hard-earned freedom that will tell in the end. The war will not be won by mercenary armies with mercenary motives, howsoever efficient they might be.

Coming to India, the first step to be taken by the British Government is to make public declaration of their recognition of India as a free and independent nation which can draw up her own constitution. We must recognise that this declaration cannot be given full effect immediately, but it is essential, as the Working Committee have pointed out, that it should be applied, in so far as is possible, in the present. For it is that application that touches the minds and hearts of the people

and impresses the world. It is this present that will govern the conduct of the war and give it that vitality which can only come from the yoking of the popular will to a great task. Whatever we do must be of our free will and choice, and only then will the joint effort be really joint, for it will then be based on the free co-operation of partners in a common undertaking.

Unhappily the British Government, as is its way, has taken action already which makes reasonable approach from us difficult. They passed the Government of India Act Amending Bill through the House of Commons in all its stages in exactly eleven minutes, though they knew full well that we were entirely opposed to it. Here in India legislation and ordinances have been similarly rushed through. The India Office and the Government of India still live in an age that is long past; they neither grow, nor learn, nor remember. Even the shock of war has not had much effect on their mental processes or their ancient ways. They take India for granted, not realising that nothing can be taken for granted in this cataclysmic age, much less India which, though quiet on the surface, is shaken by all manner of forces and vital urges.

Yet, in spite of this difficulty of approach, the Working Committee have, in the spirit of true

statesmanship, stretched out their hand and offered their co-operation to the British people and all other people who struggle for freedom's cause. But India can only co-operate with dignity and freedom, or else she is not worth co-operation. Any other way is that of imposition and we have grown unused to suffer this.

How and to what extent is it necessary and possible to give present application to Indian freedom? It is clear that whatever we do must be of our free will and based on our decision. In matters pertaining to the war there must be equality of action even though this cannot be put on the statute book. India may be technically at war but there is no war situation in this country and there is absolutely no reason why our normal legislative or judicial processes should be replaced by abnormal measures. These abnormal measures have been passed. They must remain dead letters and all necessary steps should be taken through the Provincial Legislatures and the Provincial Governments. The Amending Act passed by the British Parliament should also remain a dead letter and in so far as the Provincial Governments are concerned their powers and activities should in no way be limited. Such limitations and safeguards as exist in the constitution should not be applied. So far there is little difficulty.

But it is essential that even during this interim period India's representatives should have effective control over the policies and activities in the centre in regard to external affairs, armed forces, and financial matters. Only in this way can a real consent policy be carried through. For this purpose some *ad hoc* machinery will have to be devised. Amendments of the present Act are not desirable to bring this about. The Act will have to go as a whole when the constitution of India's making takes it place. Meanwhile effective interim arrangements can be made by consent.

It is clear that if India's war policy is to have popular backing and support, it must be carried on by popular representatives in whom the people have confidence. It is no easy matter to live down the prejudice of generations past and to make our people to look upon the effort as their own. This can only be done by taking them into our confidence, by explaining our policies, and by convincing them that it is to their advantage as well as for the world's good. That is the way democracy functions. We shall have to know the larger policies governing the war also, so that we can justify them before our people and the world.

A war policy for a nation must inevitably first take into consideration the defence of that country.

India must feel that she is taking part in her own defence and in preserving her own freedom as well as helping in the struggle for freedom elsewhere. The army will have to be considered a national army and not a mercenary force owning allegiance to some one else. It is on this national basis that recruitment should take place so that our soldiers should not merely be cannon-fodder, but fighters for their country and for freedom. In addition to this it will be necessary to have a large-scale organisation for civil defence on a militia basis. All this can only be done by a popular government.

Even more important is the development of industries to supply war and other needs. Industries must develop on a vast scale in India during war time. They must not be allowed to grow in a haphazard way but should be planned and controlled in the national interest and with due safeguards for workers. The National Planning Committee can be of great assistance in this work.

As the war progresses and consumes more and more commodities, planned production and distribution will be organised all over the world, and gradually a world planned economy will appear. The capitalist system will recede into the background and, it may be, that international control of

industry will take its place. India, as an important producer, must have a say in any such control.

Finally, India must speak as a free nation at the Peace Conference.

We have endeavoured to indicate what the war and peace aims of those who speak for democracy should be and in particular, how they should be applied to India. The list is not exhaustive, but it is a solid foundation to build upon, and an incentive for the great effort needed. We have not touched upon the problem of a re-organisation of the world after the war, though we think some such re-organisation essential and inevitable.

Will the statesmen and peoples of the world and especially of the warring countries, be wise and far-seeing enough to follow the path we have pointed out. We do not know. But here in India let us forget our differences, our Leftism and Rightism, and think of these vital problems which face us and insistently demand solution. The world is pregnant with possibility. It has no pity at any time for the weak or the ineffective or the disunited. Today when nations fight desperately for survival, only those who are far-seeing and disciplined and united in action will play a role in the history that is being made.

September 23, 1939.

A MESSAGE TO THE ENGLISH PEOPLE

(*This message was sent by cable to the* News Chronicle *London*)

The spell of violence and inhuman warfare holds Europe and threatens the fabric of civilisation all over the world. Behind the clash of arms there is a deeper clash of ideas and aims and the future of the world hangs in the balance. History is being made not only on the battlefields but in the minds of men, and the vital question for all of us is whether that history is going to be different from that of past ages and whether this terrible war will make essential difference to human freedom and end the very causes of war and human degradation. To India with her thirst for freedom and horror of war and violence, this question is of paramount importance. She has reacted strongly against the philosophy and methods of fascism and Nazi aggression and brutality and seen in them the negation of all she stands for. World peace for her means freedom and democracy and the ending of the domination of one nation over another. So India condemned

aggression in Manchuria, Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia, and was deeply distressed at events in Spain and the brutal Nazi invasion of Poland. India will therefore gladly throw her resources for a new order of peace and freedom.

If this kind of peace is the objective then war and peace aims must be clearly defined and action today must conform to them. Not to do so or to hesitate is to demonstrate that there are no clear aims and what is said vaguely is not meant seriously. It is to justify apprehensions of all who have learnt from bitter experience that wars overwhelm ideals and result in imperialisms fighting for mastery and entrenching themselves. If this war is for democracy and self-determination and against Nazi aggression, it cannot be fought for territorial annexations, indemnities or reparations, for keeping colonial peoples in subjection, and for maintaining the imperialist system.

For this urgent reason the Congress has invited the British Government to state its war and peace aims clearly and in particular how these apply to the imperialist order and to India. India can take no part in defending imperialism but she will join in a struggle for freedom. India's resources are vast but even of greater value is her good-will and her moral support for a worthy cause. This is no

small offer that India makes for it means the ending of a hundred years of hostility between India and England, a great turning point in world history and the real beginning of the new order we fight for. Only a free and equal India can co-operate of her free will in this task. Till that vital change is made none of us have the power to make the people of India enthusiastic for a war which is not theirs. A popular war must have popular support and people must realise what it means to them. An imposed war will inevitably be resented and rouse public feeling against it.

The whole background of generations of conflict and struggle for freedom in India must be borne in mind. Our present constitution itself has been imposed upon us and has kept alive hostility. This cannot go by vague assurances and half-hearted measures which will fail of their purpose. This historic opportunity must be seized by recognising India as a free nation with the right to draw up her constitution and her charter of independence. Anything short of that will mean losing this opportunity and keeping alive the spirit of friction and hostility between India and England. It will mean that not only we in India but others doubt the sincerity of war and peace aims and there will be divergence between what is professed and what

is done.

The first step must therefore be a declaration of India's full freedom. This has to be followed by its application now in so far as is possible in order to give the people effective control of the governance of India and the prosecution of war on India's behalf. Then only is it possible to create the psychological conditions which can lead to popular support. Autocratic and ordinance rule will alienate public sympathy and lead to conflict. Already difficulties are arising, public workers have been arrested and severe restrictions placed on public and labour activities in some parts of India. This is the old way which has failed in the past and is bound to fail again.

India wants to forget the past of conflict and wants to stretch out her hand in comradeship. But she can do so only as a free nation on terms of equality. She must be convinced that that past is over and we are all striving for a new order not only in Europe but in Asia and the world. Her invitation to the British Government is not only on her behalf but all those in the world who believe in peace and freedom and democracy. It will be tragedy for all of us if the deep significance of this gesture is not appreciated and full response not made to it. Such a response will hearten people

all over the world and will be a greater blow to Nazism than a victory on the battlefield.

October 5, 1939.

THE ANSWER

The Viceroy has spoken and the British Government has given answer to India's questions. What were those questions that the Congress put, not on behalf of itself only, not only on behalf of the hundreds of millions of India, but for vast numbers of human beings all over the world, who were sick and weary of war and violence, of fascism and imperialism and all their ugly and numerous progeny, and hungered for a new order and peace and freedom? "The Working Committee invite the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged, in particular, how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. Do they include the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy will be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people?"

We have the answer now. The Viceroy "is authorised by His Majesty's Government to say that at the end of the war they will be very willing

to enter into consultation with representatives of several communities, parties and interests in India and with the Indian Princes with a view to securing their aid and co-operation in framing such constitutional modifications as may be deemed desirable." Further he announces the immediate establishment of a consultative group of all major political parties in British India and of the Indian Princes which will associate public opinion with the conduct of the war. In order to comfort us still further, we are told that the pledge given in the preamble of the Act of 1919 still holds.

We would hesitate ordinarily to comment in haste on these pronouncements for the gravest issues are at stake, and it is right and proper that India's rejoinder should be given by the Congress Working Committee. We presume that the Committee will meet soon and give the only lead to the country that seems possible now. But while it is our privilege to carry the message of the Congress, and to discipline ourselves and the nation in the pursuit of our objectives and ideals, we may not remain silent even for a day when a challenge has been thrown out to the Indian people and to the ideals we have cherished for so long.

The last six weeks have seen the elimination

of a nation from the map of Europe and the crushing of a proud people. That has been a major occurrence, full of tragedy, and yet it is but a minor prelude to the vast and cataclysmic changes that are taking place before our eyes. Hitler, who dreamed of dominion over Europe and possibly the world, has been compelled by force of circumstances to give up that dream and to submit to the superior might of Soviet Russia. The South-East of Europe lies beyond his reach now, the Baltic States and the Baltic Sea are dominated by Russia. Half Poland has gone and Nazi Germany, with all her armed might, plays second fiddle and lives in fear of what may come.

This is the beginning, the first fruits of the war. What will follow in the months and years to come we can only dimly see now, but only the blind can imagine that the present-day world of empires and colonies and dependencies will survive this holocaust of war. The world of yesterday is dead, the world of today is dying and not all the king's horses nor all the king's men will be able to keep it alive. The new world may be good or bad, but it will be entirely different from the old.

Every man and woman of intelligence has some realisation of these profound changes that are taking place in this era of war and revolution. But

not so the British Government and not the Government of India. They live in Whitehall and New Delhi apart from humbler, though perhaps more intelligent folk, and they neither see nor remember. In 1939 they remind us of a preamble of the Act of 1919. For them these twenty years have been but a bad dream that is no more, and though the world may crash and go to pieces, who dare touch the sanctums of Whitehall or New Delhi? But we remember that even in 1919 the preamble was indignantly rejected by the Indian people, that three times since then we have faced the might of the British Empire, unarmed and peaceful and clad in simple homespun, but strong in the strength of our millions, and proud of the spirit of our people and of the ideals we cherished. We remember that in 1935 yet another Act was imposed upon us and the old Act of 1919 was consigned to oblivion. This new Act also we rejected. And now the old preamble of 1919 is fished out of the dustbin and presented to us by His Excellency the Viceroy as a gift worthy of England, fighting for democracy, and worthy of India, insistent on independence.

Need we examine any other parts of the Viceroy's statement? We ask for independence and are promised a consultation at the end of the war for such constitutional modifications as may be deemed

desirable.

Perhaps we were foolish in asking our questions. Yet we do not think so, for there is no one in India now, and few, we imagine, in the world who will be deceived by British professions of a war for democracy and freedom. We know now, beyond a peradventure, that Britain clings to her imperialism and fights to preserve it, howsoever her statesmen may cover this ancient habit of theirs by soft and pleasing words. What of the British Labour Party now and all those radicals and lovers of freedom in England who talk so eloquently of the brave new world that is coming? What of America, that great land of democracy, to which imperialist England looks for support and sustenance during this war? Does Britain think that the people of the United States will pour their gold and commodities to make the world safe for British imperialism? What of the free dominions of the British Commonwealth, who have been charmed by brave phrases and made to come to Britain's aid? How will they like this exposure of the reality that lies behind those phrases? The aims and objectives of this terrible war are clear at last, at least in so far as the present British Cabinet is concerned. Let no man doubt them.

The Congress asked a question, but in asking

that question it also gave its own answer. That answer stands. We can never be parties to supporting imperialism. The issues are clear and so are we in our minds. This is not a matter for Congressmen only but for all of us, whether we belong to the Muslim League or Hindu Mahasabha or Sikh League or any other organisation of Indians. For India's honour and India's freedom are involved and nothing else can count when these supremely vital issues are at stake.

The Viceroy has told us to think of the unity of India. His Excellency's reminder was not necessary. But even the unity of India cannot be purchased at the cost of India's freedom. We want no union of slaves in bondage. We want a united India but a free India, and we have no shadow of doubt that we shall get what we want. Meanwhile we may have to go into the wilderness again, as we have so often done in the past. If the fates so will it, we shall do so gladly, rejoicing that yet again we have been privileged to serve the cause that is dearer to us than everything else. And in doing so we shall help in building the new world order for which millions crave—an order of peace and freedom from which fascism and imperialism have been eliminated, and the days of war and violence are no more.

October 17, 1939.

WHAT BRITAIN FIGHTS FOR ?

It is an interesting and instructive exercise for the student of history to collect and read the various declarations of war aims which conquerors and governments have made throughout the ages. Always he will find a justification on the highest moral grounds, either religious or political; every aggression is justified, every brutality is condoned for the preservation of some high principle. Often he will discover that it is only the love of ultimate peace that urges the conqueror and aggressor onward. Has not even Herr Hitler said so? Recently a fascinating anthology of declared war aims was published in England and this went back two thousand years. It was astonishing to read the very same language, the same fervent love of peace, in these declarations made a hundred or a thousand years ago by kings and emperors who launched a war, as we read today. One could almost imagine, with a few verbal changes, that it was Mr. Neville Chamberlain who was speaking and not a medieval ruler.

The anthology dealt with the countries of the

West, but we have no doubt that a similar collection can be made from the declarations of Eastern rulers. The desire to hide one's real motives under cover of fine phrases and pious doctrine is a human failing common to the East and the West. There have been few among the rulers of men who have not sought to cloak their misdeeds in this manner. One there was in India two thousand years ago, the Great Ashoka, who, unique among his kind, felt the horror of war in full tide of conquest and laid bare his heart.

Looking at this past record of declarations and justifications a measure of despair seizes one, or we grow cynical. Is humanity always to go through the self-same round of deceit; must there always be this vast gap between the spoken word and the shady deed? Yet hope fills us every time these brave declarations are made and we try to believe, against all past experience, that this time at least the word will be translated into the deed. So it was in 1914 and after, and millions believed, and believed in vain, that the war was to end war and to establish peace and freedom on this unhappy planet of ours. We know the heritage of that war; we know the deceit and treachery and betrayal of politicians; we know well the horror that has pursued us since then.

And now, a quarter of a century later, the same phrases are repeated, the same pious declarations made, and the bright youth of many a country, ignorant or forgetful of past deceptions but full of faith and fine enthusiasm, marches into the jaws of death. Must we go through the self-same round again? Not again, we all say, never again. Perhaps not, perhaps at long last humanity will rise above the petty evasions of politicians and those who have too long ruled our destinies. But let us not be too sure, for human beings have an infinite capacity to believe what they want to and so to allow themselves to be deceived.

Ever since the present war in Europe began there was general but vague talk of war aims, and vaguely it was answered by those in authority. Then came the statement of the Congress Working Committee on September 14, and for the first time an attempt was made, by an organisation known throughout the world, for a clear definition of war aims. The statement dealt with India, but it dealt also with the main issue before the world, which was exercising the minds of intelligent and sensitive men everywhere. It was a lead for which the world seemed to be waiting and millions reacted to it even in England and America. Let us be clear what we are fighting for, let us pin down our poli-

ticians and leaders to clear issues. Enough of vague platitudes. The Working Committee asked clear and definite questions. It was not possible to evade them, for evasion itself was tantamount to an answer.

We realise now, even more than we did before, the signal service that the Working Committee rendered to the cause of India and world peace and freedom. For it brought these vital issues to the forefront of world politics and made it difficult for the British Government to keep its aims and objectives wrapped up in the fog of war. They had to be clear and definite. We sympathise with them for the predicament they found themselves in.

And now we have had the answer with the high authority of His Britannic Majesty's Government. We have read yet again the Viceroy's long statement, and the more we read it, the more our amazement grows. We have been told by His Excellency that "the situation must be faced in terms of world politics and political realities in this country." We have endeavoured to do so, and the only conclusion we can reach is that the Viceroy and the British Government live in a world entirely different from ours, whose politics and objectives appear to us fantasies of the mind which have nothing to do with the realities of the world we

We have no intention of shouting *Heil Hitler*; neither do we intend to shout *British Imperialism Zindabad.*

October 18, 1939.

TWENTY YEARS

The Great War was over and the great men of the victorious nations sat in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles to refashion the world. One of them, from across the Atlantic, talked eloquently of democracy and self-determination and a League of Nations to insure peace. But the others, secure now in victory, had no further use for this idealistic talk meant for the multitude. It had served its purpose to rouse public enthusiasm, and now it must not be allowed to interfere with the scheming of hard-headed realistic men. The Big Five met, and then the Big Three, and out of their labours emerged the Treaty of Versailles. By this Treaty all the hopes and idealism of the war were buried deep down in the soil which contained the mortal remains of so many brave young men. By that Treaty they were betrayed.

We have lived in this era of the Versailles Treaty these twenty years, and each succeeding year has brought war and revolution, horror and misery to the peoples of the world. And yet the old guard of politicians who had brought the war

and made this peace continued in command and stuck complacently to their old ways which had so often brought disaster. Not everywhere, for there was one vast area where a new order came into being and challenged continually the old.

Mussolini rose in Italy and the world heard of Fascism. Dictatorships were established in many of the countries of Europe. An unprecedented inflation crushed the middle classes of Germany. Meanwhile the wise men met at Geneva or elsewhere and discussed in leisurely fashion the advantages of disarmament or the question of Reparations.

Suddenly the great depression seized the world by the throat and rich and proud England was alarmed and prosperous America was shaken up. Year after year it spread, bringing international trade almost to a standstill and writing with letters of fire the decay of the capitalist structure.

Hitler came, child and avenger of Versailles, and set a new standard in brutality and cruel repression. England encouraged him, in spite of her public opinion, and looked upon him as the champion who would check the Soviet tide. Events moved more swiftly still, over-topping one another, and aggression followed aggression. England stood by, protesting but nevertheless encouraging

by her action. So it was in Manchuria and later in Abyssinia. Hitler took possession of Austria, almost on the invitation of the British Government. And then came the tragedy of Czecho-Slovakia in September 1938.

All this is past history but we refer to it again for we forget it at our peril. The Viceroy has done well to take us back twenty years, for we shall refresh our minds with events already buried in the pages of history and learn our lesson from them. We shall remember British policy in China, which connived at aggression, and Munich, that turning point in the world's history. And who can ever forget Spain and the infinite horror of her betrayal? We shall remember that the men of Munich are still at the helm of affairs in England and guide her policy. Is it surprising that they should father the new statement of British policy in India, which is as old as British imperialism itself? It is a policy of crushing all liberal and freedom loving elements and "appeasement" of the reactionaries both in Europe and India, of entrenching their empire and protecting their financial and other vested interests.

Is it not true that even after the invasion of Poland by Germany, Mr. Neville Chamberlain still dreamed of the 'appeasement' of Germany and turning the energy and armed might towards

Russia? In that fateful meeting of the British Parliament, on the eve of the declaration of war, the British Prime Minister spoke haltingly and cautiously and roused the ire even of his Conservative followers who shouted to the Labour Leader to speak for the Nation. Sensing the strength of public opinion, Mr. Chamberlain sent that night his ultimatum to Germany.

These are the leaders in this war against aggression and for democracy. The ghosts of Munich and Spain haunt them as they haunt the world, and it is not through them that peace and freedom can come. Can India, who was indignantly and insistently opposed to their foreign policy, now agree to become their tool? But the question has already been answered by the Viceroy.

Twenty years have passed by beyond recall and not even a Viceregal statement can bring them back. India has learnt much from them and developed strength and, in spite of much diversity, unity of purpose. She will not go back, and even if she was weak and badly led, the world would not allow her to do so. For the dominating fact in the world today is the break-up of the old order, both political and economic, and these broken eggs cannot be put together again. The British Empire representing this dying order, will pass

away, and the present economic system will give place to another.

We cannot go back, nor can we remain static and standing in this dynamic world. And those who do not realise this or who cannot keep step with events have already ceased to count and will drop off like stragglers from an army on the March.

The Congress had offered to the British Government and people the hand of friendship and co-operation and the ending of the long dispute between India and England. It was a brave offer, and it was made on the only possible terms, the freedom of India and association in a common adventure on equal terms. The Congress asked for no privileges or power for itself. It wanted power for the Indian people who through their elected Constituent Assembly would frame their constitution and assume power. That was the only democratic approach to the problem, fair to all, and leading possibly to a friendly association with Britain.

That offer has been rejected. But time marches on and soon it may be too late to give effect even to that offer. The millions of India cannot be held back and if one door is barred to them, they will open other doors.

October 19, 1939.

1919—1939

We have surveyed very briefly, in a previous article, the last twenty years in Europe. That was necessary, even to understand the position in India, for Europe has been the storm-centre of the world, and its inner conflicts and contradictions have had far-reaching repercussions. India has followed this moving and tragic drama with anxious interest and expressed her own opinions in regard to it with emphasis and clarity. Her sympathies inevitably went to the side of the victims of aggression, and her own interest prompted her to resist the advancing tide of fascism and naziism, as she had resisted imperialism. Events in China, Abyssinia, Austria, Palestine, Czecho-Slovakia and Spain moved her people profoundly, and British imperial policy in regard to them was resented and condemned. She began to think of the future, of the war that seemed inevitable and laid down her policy for it. The mind of India grew with the times and adapted itself to changing circumstances.

Nineteen nineteen was a turning point in India. Mr. Montagu had come and gone and his report

had seen the light of day. As usual with British policy in India, it was too late and the vast majority of the Indian people rejected it as well as the Act that was framed in accordance with it. Some eminent Indians, till then members of the Congress, thought otherwise and left the Congress to form later the Liberal Federation. But their very departure showed where the nation stood, for a handful were opposed to the vast majority. The preamble of 1919, that the British Government offer us today, was rejected with indignation in that very year. It was not good enough even in 1919.

The Rowlatt Acts came, and Mahatma Gandhi appeared on the Indian political scene, a mighty and elemental force which was to revolutionise our political life. Martial Law in the Punjab, Jallianwala Bagh, the Khilafat agitation and non-co-operation —the masses of India stirred as they had never been stirred before. Swaraj was our goal and for that we struggled, not this preamble or that promise condescendingly made by British Ministers.

We need not go through this survey of recent times, though in the fast onrush of events, they seem today so far away, and many of our present-day generation know little of them. Their memories are short. But the face of India changed during these years and even the poor and humble peasant

in the fields became very different from what he had been.

Twelve years ago, in Madras, the Congress spoke of independence, and two years later, by the banks of the Ravi river, we pledged ourselves to this and solemnly resolved to achieve it. Civil disobedience followed and India's manhood and womanhood took that pledge afresh in common suffering and sacrifice. The might of an empire sought to crush them and to create divisions among them, and succeeded superficially for a while, but who could crush or extinguish that bright flame of freedom that warmed our hearts and illumined our minds?

The dreary succession of Round Table Conferences came and British statecraft sought to array and combine all that was most reactionary in India against India's will to be free. The Act of 1935 followed and we rejected it. Yet we decided to accept ministerial office after long controversy. History will decide whether we acted rightly then or not, but we know already the hollowness of that Act and the numerous pitfalls that surrounded us. Vast problems encompassed us, the legacy of generations of imperialist and authoritarian rule. Feudal princes, autocrats of their domains, were encouraged and supported by British authority. An out-

of-date land system bore heavily on our masses. Our trade and industry could not prosper because of the policy of our rulers which protected foreign interests and enterprises, and by their safeguards and special powers prevented us from finding scope for growth. Our financial policy was laid down in the interests of the City of London. Our revenues were largely mortgaged for British interests and the services were protected. This was the Provincial Autonomy we received and though popular ministers sat on the chairs of authority, all the apparatus of government was the old one, authoritarian and bureaucratic, looking with hostility at the innovations they did not approve, and often doing their utmost to hamper and obstruct. Worse even than this was the constant attempt to encourage fissiparous tendencies and the reactionary elements in the country, so as to weaken the very government they claimed to serve.

Yet the Provincial Governments did much good work and relieved somewhat the burdens on the masses. But ever their difficulties grew and it became obvious that the problems of India could not be solved unless real power came into the hands of the people. An autocratic and irresponsible government might, by force of arms, hold a country and govern it. A popular and responsible govern-

ment would do so only if it had real power and with the consent of the people. Any intermediate stage was unstable and unable to survive for long, for responsibility was divorced from power.

So, at the Tripuri Congress, the National Demand was put forward as the inevitable and urgent development of past events. Provincial Autonomy, such as it was, had exhausted itself and must give place to a constitution of India's making--the Charter of Indian independence. This was no new demand, for the Congress had asked for a Constituent Assembly for many years. The Congress had never accepted the Act of 1935. The very first resolution of the Provincial Assemblies had been to emphasise this non-acceptance and demand a Constituent Assembly. So this was no new demand but it had urgency attached to it now. There was no other way except that of conflict.

The war came upsetting everything and forcing us to think on novel lines. The existing order in India became utterly inadequate and impossible of continuance. The choice lay between going forward to independence and free nationhood or going back to a shadow of provincial autonomy with an authoritarian central government in control. The war raised other problems also but let us confine ourselves for the present to our internal situation.

It was impossible and inconceivable for India to go back; it had been difficult enough to carry on with existing conditions. So inevitably India repeated her old National Demand and offered her cooperation as a free nation. She did not even lay stress on the affront offered her by declaring her a belligerent country without her consent and despite her previous declarations. It was the fairest and most generous offer that any self-respecting country, situated as she was, could have made. There was no bargaining in it, no spirit of the market place.

Yet that has been rejected with contempt, and we are told to twist our heads and look back twenty years ago, to something we had pushed aside even then as unworthy of consideration. We are supposed to forget the history of a generation in India, to shut our eyes to our present, to ignore what is happening all over the world, to break our solemn pledges, and, at the bidding of our imperialist rulers, to smother the dreams and ideals which have given us life and strength.

Time passes and the world changes and the National Demand of yesterday is already old history. It may not be adequate enough for to-morrow.

October 20, 1939.

LORD ZETLAND'S APOLOGIA

The Marquis of Zetland has spoken soft and soothing words and bestowed praise on all and sundry. He has not even forgotten Mahatma Gandhi. Perhaps he did not know when he spoke in the House of Lords of what Gandhiji had said about the Viceroy's statement, or else he might have been less eager to pay a tribute to him. Some days ago Lord Zetland had referred in terms of patronising condescension to the Congress statement and we had heard the old voice of British imperialism, hard and metallic to the ear. Foolishly many of us had imagined that Lord Zetland was of the old guard and did not represent the spirit of the times and the new temper of the British people. Vainly we had expected more wisdom from others. But we were mistaken. The old imperialist guard holds the citadel in England and in India and its true authentic voice is that of Lord Zetland.

It is well that we recognise this now and shape ourselves accordingly. In the days to come, with all their trials and difficulties, our minds will be at

peace so far as the British Government is concerned. We shall know that between us and them there is nothing in common, no meeting ground, no compromise. And if the British people are truly represented by this Government and accept its policy, then we follow different paths in war as well as peace. Lord Zetland and his Government have put the final seal on this bill of divorce, and the gulf that separates us is wider than the many oceans that intervene between his country and ours.

What is the theme of Lord Zetlands' speech, the main burden of his argument? The root cause of difficulty in India is the conflict between various communities which will not agree in spite of Britain's best endeavour. We know this conflict to our sorrow and cost. But what has been Britain's part in it, what is her part now? During these generations of British rule has she composed our differences or sought always to aggravate them? Every student of Indian history knows how this policy of divide and rule has been followed persistently, and how the seeds of conflict and division have been cunningly sown. As the popular movement has grown and nationalism has become a force, the communal problem has ever been intensified by British policy. Separate electorate were the creation of the British, and favour was shown

to this group or that to wean it away from the rising tide of nationalism. The Round Table Conferences were significant examples of the art of meeting a national demand by side-tracking it in favour of communal demands. Invite people, the known and the unknown, from all manner of odd groups, see to it that they are of the sort that cannot agree, give weightage to all the reactionary elements, and then proclaim to the world that Indians cannot agree among themselves.

This is the kind of Round Table Conference to which we are again invited, or rather to which we might be invited "if at the end of the upheaval caused by the war, when circumstances may well differ markedly from what they are today, there is a desire on the part of those concerned of modifications of particular features of the plan, then, in such circumstances, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to enter into consultation with representatives of the several communities, parties and interests in India and with the Indian Princes etc." We can well imagine that at the end of the war circumstances will markedly differ from what they are today, perhaps more markedly than the Marquis of Zetland would approve of. But whatever these circumstances might be, we can assure him now with full confidence that we shall have no desire

to be invited and that we do not want any "modifications of particular features of the plan," nor are we prepared for any consultations on the proposed basis, now or later. We shall have nothing to do with his Round Table Conferences, and he is welcome to invite whom he wills to them. We recognise no right of the British Parliament or the British people to interfere with our affairs, and we speak to no one except in terms of the independence of India.

What was the Congress demand? The independence of India and the drawing up of India's Constitution through a Constituent Assembly freely elected by her people. There was no claim for the Congress or for any community or group. If we believe in democracy, that was the only way. The minorities may legitimately ask for safeguards and protection. The Congress entirely agrees. Let us sit down and frame them. But that is no matter for the British Government or people. It is our concern.

Which minority, which group in India can be or is opposed to this demand? The Muslim League stands for independence, the brave Sikhs will have nothing else, and so with others. It is true that there are individuals, hangers-on of imperialism or the possessors of special rights created by

British imperialism, who fear a change. Is India's progress to be measured by the capacity to walk of the halt or the lame? Are we to wait till we have converted the feudal Princes? That is what the R. T. C. means. It is the spiritual home of all that has ceased to count in the world and India. But we who breathe the vital spirit of new India and draw sustenance from her awakened masses, what place have we in this assemblage of ghosts and shades?

Lord Zetland and his colleagues have conceived a new interpretation of democracy. Before anything is done, every one must agree, or else the British Government will sit here comfortably and carry off the spoils. It is some such urge, we suppose, that induces them to wage this war.

We are told that some members of the Muslim League consider the Viceroy's statement as a political triumph for the League and a defeat for the Congress. It may be a defeat for the Congress, though we do not think so. We welcome it and are convinced that out of it good will come and the country will pull itself out of the quagmire in which it has got caught. The removal of a vain illusion is no defeat.

But we hesitate to think that any member of the Muslim League, whatever his communal views

may be, can consider an insult to India and her people as a triumph for himself and his organisation. The Muslim League has sworn by the independence of India. Can they forget their pledge and take pride in alliance with imperialism?

In any event our path is clear. We shall rid ourselves of our encumbrances and get ready for the journey. The experienced traveller, who has a long way to go, takes little luggage, so that his march may be swift. We shall go our way, and there shall be no turning back for us, no regrets.

October 20, 1939.

CLEARING THE DECKS

During the last six weeks much has happened in India. Soon after the outbreak of the war various individuals, high and not so high, expressed their opinions on Nazi aggression and there was widespread condemnation of it. There was also considerable sympathy for the Polish people in their sad plight. Mahatma Gandhi spoke forcibly and other leaders condemned Nazi aggression. It is evident that the British authorities were greatly relieved by these various statements and came to the conclusion that India could be taken for granted in anything they did in connection with the war or in this country. They did not realise that our condemnation of Nazism and aggression in Poland had nothing to do with our established policy of opposition to imperialism, and the latter perforce continued. They did not appreciate that Congressmen have developed a certain discipline among themselves and, in courtesy to their colleagues and in deference to their organisation, they refrain from giving pointed expression to their individual views on vital matters which involve action. They for-

got that we have cultivated a habit of being moderate in language but strong in any action that we might decide upon. In particular, they have not, in spite of a quarter of a century's experience, understood that behind the friendliness and courteous approach of Gandhiji, there is the man of steel who does not bend on any vital matter affecting India's freedom.

Then came the Congress Working Committee's statement of September 14th crystallising nationalist opinion and giving clear expression to it. That statement immediately evoked a remarkable response in India. What innumerable people had been feeling vaguely in their minds and hearts was clarified and put down in stately language. Doubts were resolved, many a perplexity vanished, for it seemed that the people of India had found voice and pointed to the world the inevitable path which had to be followed if our present-day problems were to be solved. And the world listened in spite of attempts of censors and the like to suppress this remarkable appeal. The progressives in England hailed it; in democratic America it received considerable publicity; even in war-ridden Europe it evoked a response. People of suppressed and subject nations saw in it a charter for the oppressed. It was in tune with the spirit of the times and

whether governments listen to it today or not, they will have to pay heed to it before long.

All that has happened since then has been a logical development of that invitation of the Congress Working Committee for a clarification of war aims. Lord Zetland's speech, the A. I. C. C. meeting, the Viceroy's statement, the Muslim League's resolutions, the House of Commons' debate, and now the war resolutions in the Provincial Assemblies and the inevitable resignations of the Congress Ministries, have all followed each other in ordered sequence, throwing a flood of light on the Indian scene.

What does this light show us? First of all, the high statesmanship and wisdom of the Congress which stands justified today before India and the world. Holding to its ideals and its previous declarations, it has applied them to changing and difficult circumstances, and thus demonstrated that it has the capacity to be idealistic and practical at the same time. The freedom of India, for which it stands, has been woven into the larger picture of world freedom and war and peace aims, and a practical solution offered for the world's ills.

Secondly, the true nature of this war has become evident. The reply of the British Government to the Congress shows, beyond a doubt,

that they are moved now, as before, by a desire to preserve their imperialist interests. This is no democratic war in which the forces of democracy are ranged on one side against the forces of Naziism and reaction on the other. True, there are some democratic forces on the side of the Allies, but the Governments that control the destinies of England and France are the old discredited Governments which must bear responsibility for the present unhappy state of Europe. We cannot forget Munich and Spain. Today the French Government is a citadel of reaction, and need we say more about the British Government than that Mr. Neville Chamberlain is still the Prime Minister? We knew all this. And yet it was necessary that all doubt should be removed from the minds of the people and the reality should emerge out of the fog of war.

That reality has come and it is not beautiful to look at, and not all the fine phrasing of Sir Samuel Hoare can rejuvenate the aged and the decrepit. Imperialism is a tottering structure today, wholly out of place in modern conditions, but the British ruling class still think in its terms and seek to preserve it. They are even afraid to make a clear declaration about India's freedom. That imperialism is not in love with the minorities or even the Princes (though it utilises both to serve its main purpose);

it is mainly concerned with British financial and other vested interests in India.

It is an axiom of Indian politics that there can be no compromise between imperialism and Indian nationalism and freedom. Whatever the phase of our struggle that hostility has continued. The Congress offer was that imperialism should be ended, the independence of India recognised, and thus this age-long hostility should give place to friendship and co-operation. That offer has been rejected and we go our separate ways till fate or circumstance unites them again.

Thirdly, the position of the Muslim League has been cleared up beyond any possibility of misunderstanding. We had welcomed the League's acceptance of independence as its objective three years ago and the widening of the basis of its membership. But we were soon to realise that the old politically reactionary outlook held the field still. Under cover of communal propaganda the Muslim masses were prevented from realising this. We are not for the moment discussing the communal demands of the League. They may be right or wrong. It is conceivable for a person to be a communalist and yet an ardent believer in political freedom, though at some stage or other a conflict will arise between these two loyalties. The Con-

gress has often erred in the petty issues of politics, but it has always shown an unerring instinct whenever a major issue arose. The League, on the other hand, has a remarkable record of being wrong on the major issues, though it may occasionally be right on some trivial matter.

It is a tragedy that at this supreme crisis in our national history, the League should have sided with full-blooded reaction. We do not believe that many of its own members agree with this attitude. We are certain that the Muslim masses are firm adherents of Indian freedom. In some communal matter the League may represent them, but it certainly does not do so in matters political.

The curtain falls. The Congress Ministries go out. In all the flood of oratory in the U. P. Assembly there was the background of conflict between progress and reaction. The enthusiasm at the end gave us a glimpse of the true feeling of the U. P. and of the temper of its people. We have cleared the decks and await the action that may be demanded of us.

October 31, 1939.

THE RIGHT AND THE WRONG OF IT

For several days we lived in an air of mystery and picked up tit-bits of news and anticipations of the doings of the High Commands and the Men of Note who had foregathered in New Delhi. And now we have had a spate of information—letters and statements and even a radio broadcast by the Viceroy. His Excellency has spoken and written in moving terms and yet he will forgive us, we hope, if we are not moved overmuch by his statement. We are bad boys, we are told, who will not compose our differences in spite of every attempt of the British Government and every appeal addressed to us by the Viceroy. We have our faults and our failings, as we are only too painfully aware, but must we consider the British Government the White Angel of Peace that it claims to be ? We have some experience of this Government, stretching over an odd hundred and eighty years, and it is hard to forget this. We have some knowledge of how the communal question took shape in India and was nurtured, and grew and grew, under the benign influence of successive Viceroys and governments.

It is evident that the old tradition still holds and finds expression in British policy in India. The Viceroy has spoken, so has the Marquis of Zetland, and Sir Samuel Hoare, and others of high or low degree, not forgetting his Lordship of Salisbury who has shown a worthy interest in the 'primitive tribes' of India. Through all these utterances runs the old thread of the White Man's Burden and of British statesmen and administrators grappling with the internal troubles of this unhappy land.

What happened in Delhi? The Viceroy met Mahatma Gandhi, Shri Rajendra Prasad and Mr. Jinnah and put forward a proposal that if they could agree about the provinces, the problem of the Centre could be tackled with greater ease. It would appear that the Viceroy looked upon the crisis as something that had taken place between Mr. Jinnah and the Congress with which he had no direct concern except in the capacity of a benevolent arbitrator. What exactly had happened in the provinces which required adjustment? The Congress Governments had resigned but they did not resign on any communal issue. They resigned because of British policy with which they did not agree and from which they wished to dissociate themselves. The conflict was with the British Government.

What then were Shri Rajendra Prasad and Mr. Jinnah to decide in regard to the Provincial Governments? If Mr. Jinnah controlled British policy and could speak on its behalf, he might have been able to help. But he is himself an opponent and critic of that policy and has his own grievances against the British Government. What then was to be done about the Provincial Governments? It is beyond our capacity to understand what the Viceroy expected from his visitors, unless we presume that he has not followed or understood recent developments.

There has seldom been such widespread resentment in India as was noticed when British policy was stated by the Viceroy two weeks ago. Apart from a few individuals who, however eminent, have no representative character, everyone reacted strongly against that statement. The Muslim League, let us remember, did not approve of it; the Hindu Mahasabha criticised; even the Liberal Federation was unkind to it. The Congress reaction was the strongest of all and resulted in the resignation of the Congress Governments.

And yet in spite of all this, the Viceroy meets our leaders and, ignoring everything, asks them to go ahead with the Provincial Governments. If there were not tragedy behind all this, we would

be inclined to appreciate the humour of it. But it is tragic that His Excellency should endeavour to play this role and imagine that we can be made to play fast and loose with our innermost convictions and with our firm resolves. It is still more tragic to realise that not all the catastrophic changes that have happened and are happening in Europe, have effected the complacency of the British ruling class, or made it think in terms other than those of divide and rule. But the plane of catastrophe moves east and complacency and self-deception will not stop its progress.

It is clear that the conflict in Delhi was centred round the declaration of war aims and Indian freedom that the Congress demanded and the British Government was not prepared to make. That was the straight issue and it should have been faced frankly and in a straight-forward manner. Till this is settled satisfactorily, everything else is subsidiary. Till this 'main and moral' obstruction is removed, there is no going back of the Congress Ministries, nor any co-operation with the British Government. Till then we dissociate ourselves completely with British policy and war effort.

Let us also be clear in our minds that there is no obstruction on the Indian side to such a declaration. The Muslim League may not agree with us

in some matters, but the League stands for independence and Indian freedom. Mr. Jinnah, so far as we know, approves of such a declaration though he may not attach the same importance to it as we do. The Congress President has now made clear that the Constituent Assembly that we demand "will be formed on the widest possible basis of franchise and by agreement in regard to communal representation". Further "that there must be full protection of minority rights and interests and this protection should be by agreement between the parties concerned." That surely removes every vestige of apprehension from the minds of minorities. There will be many difficult matters for us to consider and settle but the principles are firmly established and agreed to. There is no major communal difficulty about the framing of India's constitution by such a Constituent Assembly.

And so the whole fabric of communal disunion as a bar to India's progress, conjured up by the Viceroy, fades away and vanishes at the touch of reason and reality. The only reality that counts today is Britain's carrying on a war, which becomes more and more imperialistic, and her refusal to declare her war aims explicitly. If that is so, we have made our decision and by that we shall stand.

November 6, 1939.

THE CARAVAN MOVES ON

The recent happenings in Delhi tended to mystify people and confuse issues in men's minds. But the veil has now been lifted and the real facts stand out in all their clarity. We are glad that these conversations took place in Delhi for they have helped greatly in clarifying the situation both as between the Congress and the British Government, and between the Congress and the League. The position of the minorities in the Constituent Assembly and in the constitution to be framed by that Assembly, can no longer be the subject of speculation. The Congress President has put an end to all apprehension, and Mahatma Gandhi in his "sporting offer" has put the seal to this solution.

Let no one, therefore, delude himself that the question of the minorities or the communal problem comes in the way of India's future. The conflict today, as in the long and dreary past, is between British Imperialism and the Indian people. That conflict must and will continue till it is finally resolved by the liquidation of imperialism itself and the establishment of India's independence.

All that has happened during the last few weeks has made it clear where Britain stands. None of us could possibly imagine that Mr. Neville Chamberlain's Government could stand or fight for freedom or democracy. The black record of Munich and Spain stands witness to their hatred of democratic freedom. Everywhere they supported reaction till even the liberal imperialism of Britain gasped with shame. Yet, realising that Mr. Chamberlain's policy was of the essence of fascist imperialism, the Congress made appeal for a declaration of war aims. That appeal was addressed to the British Government but it was meant for the British people and the conscience of the world.

The world, busy with its own troubles, has looked with appreciation on that appeal, for it struck a responsive chord in many a disillusioned heart. Even the British people, or many of them, expressed their admiration of the Congress stand. But public opinion counts for little in the England of today; Britain has long ceased to be a democracy. That public opinion has been against Mr. Chamberlain's Government, yet that Government continues. In this age of power politics, it is only power and strength that count, and India will have her way when her will and strength are strong enough to compel attention. That day, we are

convinced, is not far distant.

The Viceroy's statements and the various speeches in the British House of Commons, and all the strange manœuvring and clever play with the minorities, have demonstrated exactly what the British Government stand for. It is imperialism of the reddest variety and it is for empire that they fight, and the game of creating dissension amongst us continues as of old. But even the blind are beginning to see through it and India is far too politically conscious today to be misled as she was a quarter of a century ago.

When the Working Committee issued their famous statement of September 14th, there was some attempt to belittle it on the plea of bargaining. It was even hinted that all that the Congress was after was some seats on the Viceroy's Council. There will be an end to this folly, now that the Congress has even refused to consider such offers. Not all the seats on the Viceroy's Council with the Viceroyalty thrown in, have any attraction for the Congress if the "main and moral issue" is not defined to our satisfaction. Not all the incentives, personal and human, will induce the Congress to support a war which it believes to be immoral and imperialistic. If we were out for bargaining we would not care for war aims and Indian freedom,

but would eagerly grasp the prizes offered. But no prizes are of any avail to us if the aim in view is other than our national objective.

What do we want? Proof that this war is for freedom and democracy and to put an end to imperialism. How will that proof come? By an explicit declaration of war aims to that effect and by an immediate application of that declaration, in the largest possible measure in India and elsewhere.

In India this means not just seats in Council, not merely responsibility at the Centre, but power in the hands of the people to control and guide India's government and war policy. It means immediate steps by this provisional government to set the machinery of the Constituent Assembly in motion so that this Assembly might meet, as soon as it is convenient, and frame the constitution of a free India. That Assembly will then choose its representatives to meet the representatives of the British Government and settle the future economic and other relations between India and England on the basis of a treaty between them. That treaty, as envisaged, might have been a treaty of friendship. But England seems to have chosen otherwise, and the inexorable tide of events points now in another direction.

What does India want? No bargaining. No talk about unessentials and subsidiary matters. She wants to be considered and declared an independent nation. Only on that basis can she discuss or talk. For there is pride in India and love of freedom, and what shall it profit her if she gain offices and posts of honour and lose her soul and her ideals and her pride and all that has meant so much to her during these long years of struggle?

Only a few years ago a leading member of the British Government of today, then Secretary of State for India, told us that the caravan moved on though dogs barked. Why is the caravan worrying today and seeking the co-operation of these humble and noisy animals? Let the caravan move on. We shall part company with it and live our own lives and dream our own dreams.

November 7, 1939.

WHICH WAY, WHAT MEANS?

Again we are standing on the threshold of great happenings. Again our pulses quicken and our toes are aquiver, and the old call comes to our ears. We pack up our little troubles and store away our domestic worries, for what do they matter when that call comes to make us forget all else when India whom we have loved and sought to serve whispers to us and casts her magic spell on our little selves?

Yet some are impatient and in the pride of their youth they make accusation. Why this delay? Why do we go so slow when the blood tingles in our veins, and life calls to us to march? Do not worry, young manhood and womanhood of India, do not fret or grow impatient. The time will come all too soon, when you will have to shoulder this heavy burden; the call to march will also come and the pace may be swifter than you imagine. For the pace is set today by a world rushing headlong into the unknown future and none of us, whether we wish it or not, can stand when the very ground shakes underneath our feet

The time will come. May it find us ready, stout of heart and swift of limb and calm of mind and purpose. May we know well then the path we have to travel so that no doubts might assail us, no divided counsels weaken our resolve.

We know our goal, our objective, our heart's desire. Of that there need be no further argument. But what of the way we have to travel, the methods we adopt, the means that govern our actions? Surely that too is not a matter for argument; for long years we have blazed the trail and fashioned the way so that others may follow on the well-trodden path. Twenty years ago many might have doubted the efficacy of this straight and narrow way but today we have long experience to guide us, our own successes and failures to teach us. In spite of attempts to divert us from it we have stuck to it with a firmer resolve and the millions of India have understood its significance and efficacy and are wedded to it as never before. The Congress continues to declare its firm faith in it; for it there is no other way.

And yet it is necessary that we do not take too much for granted, and that in this hour of destiny we examine afresh its implications and accept them with all our heart and mind. This is no time for theory or idle speculation; action

awaits us and action demands concentration of mind and effort and cannot permit the philosophy of doubt or the luxury of debate in the midst of action. Much less can it permit individuals or groups neutralising that very action by their contrary methods and by their challenging the very roots of that action.

It is necessary that we examine this question frankly and come to clear and final decisions, for a new generation has arisen which has no roots in our past experience and speaks a different language, and there are some who openly or secretly and from even the shelter of our organisation, express contempt for our methods and means. It may be, as we well believe, that these doubters and dissidents are few and cannot make much difference to a vast nation-wide movement. But it is possible that they might produce confusion in many minds and lead to happenings which injure our cause. Therefore there must be clarity and decision. We can take no unnecessary risks in the struggle ahead of us.

Nineteen years ago the Congress adopted non-violence as its method of action and in these years that have passed we have experimented with it on many an occasion. We impressed the world, but what is more important we impressed our-

selves and drew amazing strength from what we did and how we did it. The old choice of a subject people—submission or violent revolt—no longer applied to us. We had a potent weapon, the value of which grew with our growing strength and understanding of it. It was a weapon which might be used anywhere but it was peculiarly suited to the genius and present condition of India. Our own example is there to justify it and to comfort and cheer us. But world events during the past few years have demonstrated the futility and brutality of the methods of violence.

Few of us, I suppose, can say that the era of violence is over or is likely to end soon. Today violence flourishes in its intensest and most destructive and inhuman form, as never before. Yet its very virulence is a sign of its decay. It will die or it will kill a good part of the world.

"The sword, as ever, is a shift of fools
To hide their folly."

But we live in an age of folly and madness and our rulers and those who govern human affairs are the true products of this age. From day to day we face this terrible problem: how to resist violent aggression? For the alternative is often no other than meek submission and surrender to evil. Spain resisted with violence and though she succumbed in

the end, her people set a magnificent example of courage and heroic endurance. Forsaken by their friends, they checked for two and a half years the tide of fascist aggression. Who will say, even today after their defeat, that they were wrong, for they had no other honourable course left open to them. The method of non-violence was not in their minds and was, under the circumstances, out of their reach. So also in China.

Czechoslovakia with all her armed might and undoubted courage succumbed without a fight. True she did so because her friends betrayed her. But still the fact remains that all her armed might proved of no avail to her in her time of need. Poland was utterly vanquished in three weeks of struggle and her great army and fleets of æroplanes vanished into nowhere.

The way of violence and armed might is only feasible today, even in the narrowest interpretation of immediate success, when the armed forces are superior or equal to those opposed to them. Otherwise there is surrender without a fight or a collapse after the briefest of struggles, bringing utter defeat and demoralisation in their train. Petty violence is completely ruled out as it has not even the virtue of holding out a bare possibility of success, and it brings all the horrors of defeat and disruption.

What the future will bring to India is beyond our ken. If that future is still one of armed national forces, it is difficult for most of us to conceive of a free India without a national army and all the other apparatus for defence. But we need not consider that future now. We have to deal with the present.

In this present these doubts and difficulties do not arise for our course is clear and our path marked out. This is the way of non-violent resistance to all obstructions to Indian freedom, and there is no other way. Let us be quite clear about it for we dare not proceed to action with our minds being pulled in different directions. I am not aware of any other way offering a ghost of a chance of effective action to us. Indeed there will be no real action at all if we think of other ways.

I believe there is general agreement among Congressmen on this question. But there are a few, somewhat new to the Congress who, while apparently agreeing, plan differently. They realise that there can be no national and nation-wide movement except through the Congress. All else would be adventurism. They want therefore to utilise the Congress and at the same time to break through it in directions which are opposed to Congress policy. The proposed technique is to embed themselves in the Congress and then to undermine

its basic creed and method of action. In particular, the continuance of the technique of non-violence is to be combated, not obviously and patently, but insidiously and from within.

Now it is open to any Indian to put forward his own proposals and ideas, to work for them and convert others to his view-point, and even to act up to them if he thinks that it is vital to do so. But it is not open to him to do so under cover of some thing else. That would be misleading the public, and out of such deception mass movements do not arise. That would be treachery to the Congress and sabotage of a movement in full flood. If there is ideological conflict, it is all to the good that this should see the light of day and the people should understand it and decide. This should be so at any time, much more so on the eve of great happenings. No organisation can tolerate internal sabotage when it is thinking in terms of coming to grips with a powerful adversary. We cannot have indiscipline in our own ranks or a division of counsel when action calls us.

It becomes essential for us therefore to decide this issue with all clarity and definiteness. We have of course decided it so far as the Congress is concerned and we propose to hold by that decision. Any other course is ineffective and fraught with

peril to the nation. It is not difficult for us, if we were so minded, to produce chaos in India, but out of chaos does not necessarily, or even usually, emerge freedom. In India there are obvious possibilities of chaos leading to the most unfortunate of consequences. We cannot always predict the consequences of our action, especially when we move on the plane of the masses. We take risks and must take them. But it would be inconceivable folly to do something which adds to these risks enormously, puts obstructions in the way to our freedom, and takes away that moral stature from our movement which has been our pride these many years. When the world is awearying of the methods of violence for us even to think of a reversion to them, would be tragedy indeed.

We must therefore stick, stoutly and wholeheartedly, to the method of non-violence and reject all substitutes that might be offered to us. We must remember that it is not possible to have a variety of methods functioning side by side, for each weakens and neutralises the other. We must therefore choose wisely and abide by our choice, not spoiling it by flirtation with other ways. Above all we must realise that non-violence is non-violence. It is not just a word to be used mechanically when our minds function differently, and our mouths

utter other words and phrases opposed to it and our actions belie it. We have to be true to it in every way, if we are to be just to it, to ourselves, and to our cause.

November 15, 1939.

FREEDOM IS IN PERIL

On innumerable walls and boardings in London and all over England appears, in large letters, the legend: "Freedom is in Peril, Defend it with all your Might." This is the appeal of the British Government to their people, to join the war and give their lives for freedom's sake. For whose freedom? Not India's, we know, for we have been told so. Not the subject countries of British and other imperialisms, for England's rulers are discreetly silent on that issue, in spite of our invitation. Is it the freedom of Europe that England is fighting for, as Mr. Chamberlain has said? For what country in Europe, for what people? We seem to remember a country that once existed, called Czechoslovakia, "that far away country about which we know so little," as the British Prime Minister said a year ago, and then proceeded to put an end to it. There was also once a gallant democratic Republic in Spain, but she was stabbed to death by those who pretended to be her friends and paid lip service to democracy.

There is Poland, now, no more. Will the old

Poland rise again; does Mr. Chamberlain believe this or fight for it? Half of it knows a greater freedom today than she has ever experienced in the past and her representatives speak in Moscow's Parliament. It is strange that while we in India talk interminably of Constituent Assemblies and constitutions a war-ridden country emerges within a few weeks with a freer constitution.

What does England fight for? For whose freedom does Mr. Chamberlain hanker? If it is English freedom, he is well entitled to appeal to his people. But Bernard Shaw and others have told us how freedom is rapidly disappearing under war-time regulations in England's green and pleasant island. The very fascism and authoritarianism that the English people have condemned in Germany creep over and numb their democratic faculties. England is no democratic country today and the imperialism she has nourished abroad is coming back to her in fascist garb.

How can we know what England is fighting for, for they will not tell us, even though we ask. But the passing show is there to enlighten us and give answer to our questions; and though official lips may be sealed, official acts display the intent behind them. We see imperialism in full play in war as in peace, and the ruling classes of Britain

holding on to their dividends and vested interests. They have no intention of losing their present freedom to add to their dividends at other's expense. It is for this freedom that Britain's rulers are fighting. It is for the defence of this that they summon the manhood and youth of their country and want to summon our manhood also.

"His Majesty's Government" we are told by Lord Zetland "find it impossible to accept this position"—the position being the Congress demand that India be declared an independent nation and should frame her constitution without external intervention, through a Constituent Assembly, based on the widest franchise and by agreement in regard to communal representation, such Assembly securing the protection of minority rights by agreement. So that is impossible and we are relieved to have a straight answer.

The Marquis of Zetland goes on to say that "the long standing British connection with India has left His Majesty's Government with obligations towards her which it is impossible for them to shed by disinteresting themselves wholly in the shaping of her future form of government." We ourselves vaguely thought that His Majesty's Government would not forget or ignore their obligations to British financial or industrial or other interests in

India, and would sternly repress even their love for freedom when this came into conflict with these obligations. We are obliged to the noble Marquis for his statement and elucidation. Let there be no more talk of communal or other issues coming in the way of a declaration of Indian freedom. It is the City of London and all that it represents that bars the way, and noble Lords and Commoners carry out its will.

We are a little weary of long debates, and patronising advice, and interviews, and all this game of covering and hiding the iron hand of imperialism. We prefer to see and face the reality. It is better to have autocratic rule in India and a suspension of the constitution than a mockery of freedom. It is better for us to be in the wilderness than to be tied up to chairs of office, prisoners of a constitution imposed upon us.

His Majesty's Government find it impossible to accept our position. We find it impossible to accept theirs, or indeed any position except that of a free nation. There we both stand, facing each other across a wide gulf that cannot be bridged. The future will decide between us, the future of war and revolutionary change. We shall not merely await that future but help to shape it. For the present let us accept the conflict of two apparent impos-

sibilities, and think of and prepare for the future.

Meanwhile, may we accept for once the advice of Britain's Government and remind our own people that

> Freedom is in Peril !
> Defend it with all your Might.

November 8, 1939.

RUSSIA AND FINLAND

The conflict between Russia and Finland has developed into a war. It is natural for our sympathies to go out to a little country which is being attacked by a great Power; it is inevitable that we should compare what appears to be unprovoked Russian aggression with recent examples of Nazi aggression. Can we forget that Soviet Russia has for years past condemned all such aggression and asked loudly for action against the aggressor nation?

These reactions are inevitable. And yet let us remember that we live in war time and are surrounded by one-sided news and propaganda. For us to form final opinions on this slender and slippery foundation would not only be unsafe but might lead us into wrong paths. It was never so necessary as now for us to view events in proper perspective and not to be led away by interested propaganda. We sympathise with Finland but we have no sympathy for those Powers who want to exploit Finland for their own advantage. Even Fascist Italy cries 'poor little Finland' and expresses pious horror at Russia's invasion of Finland.

We live in an age of power politics of the most blatant and offensive type. Violence and the threat of violence are supreme today in human affairs and international law and moral and spiritual values have ceased to be so far as governments are concerned. The doctrine of 'Mein Kampf' has truly imposed itself upon the world far more effectively than Nazi force or intrigue. That doctrine is no new one, though it has seldom been stated so frankly and unblushingly as in this Bible of the Nazi world. The older imperialisms, having settled down, assumed outwardly the garb of respectability and spoke a softer and politer language. But the policy that governed them in the past and governs them in the present, is the policy of 'Mein Kampf', for that is the essence of imperialism, as it is of Naziism. The difference between the two is this: Naziism applies the policy at home as well as abroad, Imperialism applies it chiefly abroad and maintains a facade of democracy at home. But that difference grows thin, as reaction and the practice of fascism creeps into the homelands of old imperialisms. Under cover of war conditions, France lives today under a military dictatorship; England grows progressively more reactionary.

Soviet Russia, slighted and insulted by England and France for many years, turned the tables on

them and showed them that she too could play effectively at the game of power politics. The world was amazed and the whole balance in Europe was suddenly changed. Russia becoming a dominating Power, whose will could make a vital difference, and every one hurried to pay court at the palace of the Kremlin. She had played the opportunist game, and played it, after the standards of Western diplomacy, with amazing efficiency. She called herself a realist in action. We have been pained at much that she has done in the name of realism, and her recent policy in Europe and the Far East has been exceedingly difficult to understand.

We believe that these adventures in *real politik* have done injury to the cause of Soviet Russia though in terms of power politics she may have grown mightier. For the strength of Russia lay in idealism and in the principles for which she stood. Those principles may still be there for ought we know, but the idealism grows thin, and the world is infinitely poorer for that loss. Even in these days of war, we dare affirm, that success based on pure opportunism, divorced from moral principles, will not take a country far.

But in judging Russia let us remember that she is paying back the imperialist Powers in their own coin. For these Powers to hold up their hands in

horror, because they have been outplayed and outwitted, need not fill us with sympathy for them.

The fundamental policy of England, and for some time past of France, has been an anti-Soviet policy. They surrendered to Nazi Germany in the hope that Herr Hitler would turn East and break the Soviets. They refused to come to terms with Russia even when danger threatened them. They failed in their intrigues. Even now, with war going on, there is always this background of converting it into an anti-Soviet drive. In spite of all that has happened during the last three months, it is still considered a possibility that a sudden turn of events might line up the Western Powers with Germany and Italy in a joint campaign against Russia. The French Government today is more anti-Soviet than any other Government. We have recently had—even before the Russian invasion of Poland—a concentrated and bitter anti-Soviet campaign in the British, American and French Press. It is reported that Italy has been sending arms, æroplane parts and munitions to Finland. Italian volunteers are likely to be sent there also.

Obviously all this is something much more than an affair between Russia and Finland. It all points to a sinister development of that anti-Soviet front which has been the nightmare of Russian statesmen

for many years. Fearing this, Russia has tried to fortify herself to meet this menace and all her policy in the Baltic States points this way. It is not Finland that she is afraid of, but the possibility of Finland being used as a jumping-off platform for other Powers to attack her.

It has been a well-known fact for some years that Nazi strategy had worked out plans for the invasion of Russia through Finland. A look at a map will demonstrate how very feasible this is, and how the great city of Leningrad lies within an easy march from the Finnish frontier. Bearing this in mind, one can understand the eagerness of the Soviet Government to protect one of their vital and famous centres.

Ever since the Anglo-French-German war began, Soviet policy has been one of protecting Russia from any possible attack and of consolidating her position. That policy has been both anti-Nazi (in spite of the Pact) and anti-Britain. It has indeed been selfishly pro-Soviet. We disagree with much that Russia has done recently, but we can fully understand this earnest desire for self-protection against a possible combination of enemies. In effect this policy has led to a weakening of Nazi Germany far more than to a weakening of the Allies. The German Power is caught in a vice in

the north-east and south-east and all dreams of Nazi expansion in these directions end unless the Soviets are dislodged.

Let us again remember that the hatred of British and French imperialism for Soviet Russia is far greater than their hatred of Naziism. It is a possibility which we cannot ignore that a new combination of Powers may take place ranged against the Soviet and threatening to destroy her. We do not think they can succeed even then, but it would be a tragedy if the mighty Russian experiment was hindered and broken. That experiment has many undesirable features which we have deeply regretted, but it is still the hope of the common man in his hundreds of millions.

It was Soviet Russia that willingly conceded independence to Finland, and only a few days ago the Finnish Prime Minister himself stated that Finnish independence was not threatened by the Soviet demands. But Finland became the stalking-horse of other Powers and the struggle in Finland today represents this wider conflict.

Let us therefore beware of coming to premature conclusions on partial and one-sided material. But, so far as we in India are concerned, the lesson is clear. Each country in the world today has to shift for itself and every people have to rely on

their own strength. Let us build up our own strength in our own non-violent but effective way, so that we can withstand every onslaught of imperialism and win freedom for India.

December 3, 1939.

WHAT OF RUSSIA NOW?

The last few months have brought many changes and many disasters and the world sinks deeper into the morass. The future is uncertain and full of gloom, and the bright idealism, which persisted even through the conflicts and betrayals of the thirties, seems to fade away. War and violence, aggression and duplicity, and unadulterated opportunism overshadow the world, and the shape of things to come grows more and more amorphous and shapeless. None pays heed to or believes in the fine phrases of politicians or gives credence to their promises. The new order that was to come, the dream that was to find realisation, where is it now? From whose womb will it find birth? Will this growing chaos give birth to the bright star of freedom and world co-operation?

Perhaps we grow unduly pessimistic and lack faith and courage, and the future is not so dark as the present world lead us to think. But that future must have its roots in the present and must grow out of the soil on which we stand today. It

is this today that depresses—not so much the War and all the horror that accompanies it, as the weakening of the ideals which have given us strength for so long. Those ideals remain, but doubts creep in and disturb the mind. Is humanity prepared for the realisation of those ideals? Can it achieve them in the near future?

Nothing is more significant today, or more full of sorrow, than the weakening almost everywhere (though not so much in India) of the progressive forces. Shock after shock had shattered them and laid them low, and to-day they are a disbanded and disgruntled army, not knowing which way to turn. Soviet Russia, their symbol of hope and fulfilment, has descended from the pedestal on which her ardent champions had placed her, and bartered away her moral prestige and the friendship of so many of her friends for seeming political advantage.

It has never been easy for any one to be neutral about Russia; there has either been open-mouthed admiration and enthusiasm or bitter hatred. Both attitudes were inevitably wrong and yet both could be understood. For hatred was natural among those who clung to vested interest and ancient privilege and saw in Russia the uprooter of both; and enthusiasm for a new order based on

a juster and more scientific economic system filled the minds of those who were weary of the conflicts and misery of the old order. Joy at this tremendous step made the enthusiasts overlook or excuse many an error that accompanied it. That was right, for what counted most was the basic change in Russia, and yet it was no good turn to her to accept unthinkingly everything that came out of her. No nation or people prosper if they grow complacent or avoid all criticism.

The prestige of Russia grew with her planning and her wonderful advances in many directions. Then came the batches of trials which cast gloom on this picture. Those trials, or most of them, may have been justified, but why should so much intrigue and sabotage occur on such a scale even in a country which had passed through a mighty revolution? All was not well internally, and violence and suppression of criticism grew. But the masses were not affected by the conflicts at the top and they continued to progress. The economic order was justifying itself.

Whatever doubts there were about internal conditions, there were none about Russia's external policy. Year after year this policy was based on peace, collective security and the aiding and en-

couragement of those who resisted aggression. While the Nazi and Fascist Powers were openly carrying out their programme of unabashed aggression, and England and France were aiding them by their foreign policy, Soviet Russia stood as a symbol of a straightforward and integrated policy of international peace. Because she did not fall in line with the tortuous intrigues of the western European Powers, she was ignored, insulted and humiliated.

This was a hard pill to swallow for a great Power and resentment grew and the desire to avenge itself. The pill was rejected, but in this process Russia overreached herself by adopting a policy of a too facile opportunism even at the cost of what she had stood for in the eyes of the world.

The Russo-German Pact was a shock and the manner and timing of it smacked patently of this opportunism. Yet it could be understood and partly explained. Subsequent policy in the Baltic regions carried us a step further. There was explanation for this also for the Soviet wanted to protect its north-western frontier from attack and every one knew that this was the danger zone. Yet our doubts increased.

Then came the attack on Finland. The demands made on Finland had some justification

from the point of view of Russia's future security. Yet it must be remembered that every great Power tends to extend its frontiers on the plea of security. In war time and with the possible danger of a shift in Europe which might bring about a concerted and joint attack on Russia, the desire to protect these frontiers and the great and vital city of Leningrad, was understandable. But the armed invasion of Finland passed these bounds and Russia lined herself with aggressor nations, and thereby was false to the tradition she had herself nourished for these many years. She has paid heavily for this vital error, and paid in a coin which cannot be counted, for it is made up of the wishes and ideals of innumerable human beings. No individual, no nation, can play about with this priceless coinage without suffering grievous loss, much less a nation which has prided itself on its basic principles and ideals.

It is probably true that Soviet Russia never expected any serious resistance from the Finns and believed that they would capitulate rather than risk war, as the other Baltic States had done. It is also probable that the Soviet Government expected the Finnish workers and peasantry to welcome the invasion by the Red Army. In both these beliefs they were wrong. It is an undoubted

fact that Finland was and is being assisted by Italy, France and England, and has thus become the nucleus of an anti-Soviet combination. It is also true that the news that comes to us is tainted and one-sided and we cannot place much reliance on it. But there can be little doubt that the Finnish people are resisting the invasion as a united nation, and both the Finnish Trades Unions and the peasantry are backing this resistance. A small democratic nation is fighting gallantly for its freedom and against aggression, and it is inevitable that sympathy should go to it.

To the forces of reaction everywhere this war in Finland has come as a special dispensation from heaven. Under cover of it, they have hidden their own aggressions and betrayals, and presumed to stand up as the champions of the oppressed against aggression. Their hatred of socialism and Soviet Russia as a socialist State now finds a congenial atmosphere to function. The League of Nations, which had slumbered peacefully throughout the rape of Austria and Czechoslovakia which had philosophically accepted Munich and connived at the infamous policy of non-intervention in Spain, which had said nothing about the Nazi invasion of Poland, now suddenly wakes up and is used as a weapon to strike Soviet Russia.

But the real tragedy is the effect on progressive opinion everywhere—in Europe, America and Asia. Those who are in charge of Russia's Government have themselves dealt a severer blow to their cause than any enemy or combination of enemies could have done. They have lost that enormous fund of good-will that they possessed, and injured, by associating aggression with it, the cause of socialism itself. There is no necessary connection between the two, and it is well that we separate them. But for us to advocate and defend Soviet aggression, or even to acquiesce in it passively, is to do grave disservice to socialism. There are those who have made it their creed to defend every activity of the Soviet Government, and who consider it a heresy or '*lèse majesté*' for any one to criticise or condemn any such activity. That is the way of blind faith which has nothing to do with reason. It is not on that basis that we can build up freedom here or elsewhere. Integrity of mind and sincerity of purpose can be given up only at peril to ourselves and to our cause. We are not tied down to any decisions made for us elsewhere. We make our own decisions and fashion our own policy.

We have to beware of the spate of propaganda that comes to us from tainted and partial sources

against Russia. We have to keep on guard against the atrocity campaigns worked up in foreign countries or in India against the Soviet. We have to hold to our belief, if we so believe, in socialism and the socialist order as a solvent of the world's ills. We have to remember that Soviet Russia, in spite of her many failings, has gone a long way to establish this economic system, and it would be tragedy if this mighty scheme of things, so full of promise for the future, was ended or crippled. We can be no parties to this.

But we must also realise that the Soviet Government has erred egregiously in many matters and based itself too much on violence and opportunism and authoritarianism. They have not sought to keep their means above reproach and so their ends are being twisted to fit in with these means. Means are not ends, though they control them. But means must be in keeping with the ends, or else the end itself becomes a misshapen thing, totally different from the objective aimed at.

We in India, therefore, extend our friendly sympathy to the socialism of Russia, and any attempt to break it will meet with our strong disapproval. But we do not give our sympathy to the political manœuvres and aggressions of Russia's Government. In the war against Finland our

sympathies are for the people of Finland who have struggled so gallantly to preserve their freedom. If Russia persists in this, the results will be disastrous for her and for the world.

We have to remember yet again that in this revolutionary age of transition and change, when all our old values are upset and we seek new standards, we must retain our integrity of mind and purpose and hold fast to means and methods, which are right and which are in conformity with our ideals and objectives. Those objectives will not be achieved through violence or authoritarianism or the opportunism of the moment. We must adhere to non-violence and right action and evolve through this the free India for which we labour.

January 16, 1940.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Statement issued by the Congress Working Committee at Wardha on September 14, 1939 in regard to the War Crisis and India

'The Working Committee have given their earnest consideration to the grave crisis that has developed owing to the declaration of war in Europe. The principles which should guide the nation in the event of war have been repeatedly laid down by the Congress, and only a month ago this Committee reiterated them and expressed their displeasure at the flouting of Indian opinion by the British Government in India. As a first step to dissociate themselves from this policy of the British Government, the Committee called upon the Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly to refrain from attending the next session. Since then the British Government have declared India as a belligerent country, promulgated Ordinances, passed the Government of India Act Amending Bill, and taken other far-reaching measures which affect the Indian people vitally, and circumscribe and limit the powers and activities of the provincial Governments. This has been done without the consent of the Indian people whose declared wishes

in such matters have been deliberately ignored by the British Government. The Working Committee must take the gravest view of these developments.

'The Congress has repeatedly declared its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Naziism and their glorification of war and violence and the suppression of the human spirit. It has condemned the aggression in which they have repeatedly indulged and their sweeping away of well-established principles and recognised standards of civilised behaviour. It has seen in Fascism and Naziism the intensification of the principle of Imperialism against which the Indian people have struggled for many years. The Working Committee must therefore unhesitatingly condemn the latest aggression of the Nazi Government in Germany against Poland and sympathise with those who resist it.

'The Congress has further laid down that the issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people, and no outside authority can impose this decision upon them, nor can the Indian people permit their resources to be exploited for imperialist ends. Any imposed decision, or attempt to use India's resources, for purposes not approved by them, will necessarily have to be opposed by them. If co-operation is desired in a worthy cause, this cannot be obtained by compulsion and imposition, and the Committee cannot agree to the carrying out by the Indian people of orders issued by external authority. Co-operation must be between equals by mutual consent for a cause which both

consider to be worthy. The people of India have, in the recent past, faced great risks and willingly made great sacrifices to secure their own freedom and establish a free democratic State in India, and their sympathy is entirely on the side of democracy and freedom. But India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom when that very freedom is denied to her, and such limited freedom as she possesses taken away from her.

'The Committee are aware that the Governments of Great Britain and France have declared that they are fighting for democracy and freedom and to put an end to aggression. But the history of the recent past is full of examples showing the constant divergence between the spoken word, the ideals proclaimed, and the real motives and objectives. During the war of 1914-18, the declared war aims were the preservation of democracy, self-determination, and the freedom of small nations, and yet the very governments which solemnly proclaimed these aims entered into secret treaties embodying imperialist designs for the carving up of the Ottoman Empire. While stating that they did not want any acquisition of territory, the victorious Powers added largely to their colonial domains. The present European war itself signifies the abject failure of the Treaty of Versailles and of its makers, who broke their pledged word and imposed an imperialist peace on the defeated nations. The one hopeful outcome of that Treaty, the League of Nations, was muzzled and strangled at the outset and later killed by its parent States.

'Subsequent history has demonstrated afresh

how even a seemingly fervent declaration of faith may be followed by an ignoble desertion. In Manchuria the British Government connived at aggression; in Abyssinia they acquiesced in it. In Czechoslovakia and Spain, democracy was in peril and it was deliberately betrayed, and the whole system of collective security was sabotaged by the very Powers who had previously declared their firm faith in it.

'Again it is asserted that democracy is in danger and must be defended and with this statement the Committee are in entire agreement. The Committee believe that the peoples of the West are moved by this ideal and objective and for these they are prepared to make sacrifices. But again and again the ideals and sentiments of the people and of those who have sacrificed themselves in the struggle have been ignored and faith has not been kept with them.

'If the War is to defend the 'status quo', imperialist possessions, colonies, vested interests and privilege, then India can have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue is democracy and a world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it. The Committee are convinced that the interests of Indian democracy do not conflict with the interests of British democracy or of world democracy. But there is an inherent and ineradicable conflict between democracy for India or elsewhere and Imperialism and Fascism. If Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy, then she must necessarily end imperialism in her own possessions, establish full

democracy in India, and the Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own constitution through a Constituent Assembly without external interference, and must guide their own policy. A free democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic co-operation. She will work for the establishment of a real world order based on freedom and democracy, utilising the world's knowledge and resources for the progress and advancement of humanity.

'The crisis that has overtaken Europe is not of Europe only but of humanity and will not pass like other crises or wars leaving the essential structure of the present-day world intact. It is likely to refashion the world for good or ill, politically, socially and economically. This crisis is the inevitable consequence of the social and political conflicts and contradictions which have grown alarmingly since the last Great War, and it will not be finally resolved till these conflicts and contradictions are removed and a new equilibrium established. That equilibrium can only be based on the ending of the domination and exploitation of one country by another, and on a reorganisation of economic relations on a juster basis for the common good of all. India is the crux of the problem, for India has been the outstanding example of modern imperialism and no refashioning of the world can succeed which ignores this vital problem. With her vast resources she must play an important part in any scheme of world reorganisation. But she can only do so as a free nation whose energies have been released to

work for this great end. Freedom today is indivisible and every attempt to retain imperialist domination in any part of the world will lead inevitably to fresh disaster.

'The Working Committee have noted that many Rulers of Indian States have offered their services and resources and expressed their desire to support the cause of democracy in Europe. If they must make their professions in favour of democracy abroad, the Committee would suggest that their first concern should be the introduction of democracy within their own States in which today undiluted autocracy reigns supreme. The British Government in India is more responsible for this autocracy than even the Rulers themselves, as has been made painfully evident during the past year. This policy is the very negation of democracy and of the new world order for which Great Britain claims to be fighting in Europe.

'As the Working Committee view past events in Europe, Africa and Asia, and more particularly past and present occurrences in India, they fail to find any attempt to advance the cause of democracy or self-determination or any evidence that the present war declarations of the British Government are being, or are going to be, acted upon. The true measure of democracy is the ending of Imperialism and Fascism alike and the aggression that has accompanied them in the past and the present. Only on that basis can a new order be built up. In the struggle for that new world order, the Committee are eager and desirous to help in every way. But the Committee cannot associate themselves or

offer any cooperation in a war which is conducted on imperialist lines and which is meant to consolidate imperialism in India and elsewhere.

'In view, however, of the gravity of the occasion and the fact that the pace of events during the last few days has often been swifter than the working of men's minds, the Committee desire to take no final decision at this stage, so as to allow for the full elucidation of the issues at stake, the real objectives aimed at, and the position of India in the present and in the future. But the decision cannot long be delayed as India is being committed from day to day to a policy to which she is not a party and of which she disapproves.

'The Working Committee therefore invite the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged; in particular, how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. Do they include the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy will be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people? A clear declaration about the future, pledging the Government to the ending of Imperialism and Fascism alike, will be welcomed by the people of all countries, but it is far more important to give immediate effect to it, to the largest possible extent, for only this will convince the people that the declaration is meant to be honoured. The real test of any declaration is its application in the present, for it is the present that will govern action today and give shape to the future.

'War has broken out in Europe and the prospect is terrible to contemplate. But war has been taking its heavy toll of human life during recent years in Abyssinia, Spain and China. Innumerable innocent men, women and children have been bombed to death from the air in open cities, cold-blooded massacres, torture and utmost humiliation have followed each other in quick succession during these years of horror. That horror grows, and violence and the threat of violence shadow the world and, unless checked and ended, will destroy the precious inheritance of past ages. That horror has to be checked in Europe and China, but it will not end till its root causes of Fascism and Imperialism are removed. To that end the Working Committee are prepared to give their co-operation. But it will be infinite tragedy if even this terrible war is carried on in the spirit of imperialism and for the purpose of retaining this structure which is itself the cause of war and human degradation.

'The Working Committee wish to declare that the Indian people have no quarrel with the German people or the Japanese people or any other people. But they have a deep rooted quarrel with systems which deny freedom and are based on violence and aggression. They do not look forward to a victory of one people over another or to a dictated peace, but to a victory of real democracy for all the people of all countries and a world freed from the night-mare of violence and imperialist oppression.

'The Committee earnestly appeal to the Indian people to end all internal conflict and controversy and, in this grave hour of peril, to keep in readiness

and hold together as a united nation, calm of purpose and determined to achieve the freedom of India within the larger freedom of the world.'